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MAXIMUM

THE VIDEO GAME MAGAZINE ISSUE 4 £3.50

REACH BEYOND TEKKEN WITH NAMCO'S LATEST FIGHTING SAGA

GUARDIAN HEROES • TEKKEN 2 • MAGIC CARPET • STREET FIGHTER ZERO

MAXIMUM

THE BEGINNING OF ISSUE 4

After a lengthy gestation period, **MAXIMUM** is finally becoming a monthly publication, bringing you the ultimate in coverage for PC, next generation and arcade games. While this time of the year usually witnesses a severe dearth of decent videogames, this month we have been quite fortunate due to major launches of titles such as Treasure's excellent Guardian Heroes, the console conversions of Magic Carpet and of course, Capcom's Street Fighter Alpha. Giving the latter title a run for its money is SNK's Real Bout Fatal Fury - a title which supersedes Street Fighter in terms of technical accomplishment.

Of course, leading the **MAXIMUM** assault this month is Namco's excellent Soul Edge - a 3D fighting game that pushes the System 11 hardware to its very limits. Bearing in mind that this is PlayStation technology at work, it's clear to see that Namco are way ahead of the game in terms of gameplay mechanics and technical achievement - we wait the home conversion with bated breath.

Staying with the subject of Namco, **MAXIMUM** is pleased to announce its very first "themed" issue. The next edition of the magazine will be dominated by all things Namco - you name it, we've got it. And by the way, that includes the European exclusive on the PlayStation version of Tekken 2...

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MAXIMUM

THE VIDEO GAME MAGAZINE ISSUE 4

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soul edge
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MAXIMUM ***EXTENDED PLAY***

SOUL EDGE PAGE 6
Arcade Fighting Game by Namco
Current Release
The cover game of **MAXIMUM** issue #4 is a true showcase of arcade fighting titles, based on the PlayStation technology System 11 board. Soul Edge is graphically breathtaking, and features a technical level to the gameplay that's quite outstanding. Everything you need to know Soul Edge-wise begins on page 6...

SPACE HULK PAGE 24
PC/Saturn/PlayStation Action Strategy Game by EA
March PC release, May consoles launch. Price TBA
A firm hit on the 3DO, Electronic Arts have been busy bringing their top-rated game onto the PC CD-ROM, Saturn and PlayStation systems. In this triple-format Extended Play, **MAXIMUM** brings forth huge amounts of info on this involving game.

HERETIC PAGE 34
PC 3D Action Game by id/Raven
Current Release, Price £29.99
The first third party game to use the Doom engine was Raven's Heretic, which has since been superseded by the excellent Hexen (see **MAXIMUM** issue #2). However, the first game never received a general release [illegible] shareware only) and the boys at GT Interactive have just put out a [illegible] version with extra levels. **MAXIMUM** investigates...

REAL BOUT FATAL FURY PAGE 40
Neo Geo Fighting Action Game by SNK
Current Release, Price £59.99
Some have been saying that the latest Fatal Fury is (get this) better than Street Fighter Alpha! Is this true, or is Real Bout just another outing for Geese Howard and a pair of outrageous trousers? Perhaps both, maybe neither. Full details later on.

GUARDIAN HEROES PAGE 50
Saturn Action Role-Playing Game by Treasure
April/May release, Price TBA
When Treasure produce a new videogame, true games fanatics tend to sit up and take notice - especially when the game is on as powerful a system as Sega Saturn. True to form, Treasure have performed miracles with this game. Coverage of a quality to match the game can be found here.

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA PAGE 60
PlayStation/Saturn Fighting Action Game by Capcom
April/May release, Price TBA
First revealed in **MAXIMUM** issue #3, Capcom have handed in a truly arcade-perfect conversion of their monster arcade game which Virgin are handling in Europe. We've already covered the coin-op, so this Extended Play covers the art of Street Fighting, from throwing your very first punch to pulling off incredible 19 hit Super Combo finishes.

MAGIC CARPET PAGE 72
PlayStation/Saturn 3D Carpet Simulator by Bullfrog
March release, Price TBA
Bullfrog scored a bit of an own-goal with their last action game translation to the super consoles. Yes, although Hi-Octane was a bit poor, the conversions of Magic Carpet are absolutely spot-on, and for any Saturn or PlayStation owner, it should be considered an *essential* purchase.

VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 PAGE 94
Sega Saturn 3D Fighting Action Game by AM2
Current Release, £49.99
The final part of our unrivalled Virtua Fighter 2 coverage gives our valued readership an in-depth examination of the combination system in the game. Hugely damaging multi-hit strikes are revealed, along with basic techniques on improving your play.

MAXIMUM ***CLOSE UP***

VIRTUA COP PAGE 48
Sega Saturn 3D Shooting Game by AM2
Current Release, Price £44.99/£59.99
Now that the game is a couple of months old, **MAXIMUM** is pleased to announce the full range of hidden options found in this excellent blasting game.

X-MEN: CHILDREN OF THE ATOM PAGE 70
Sega Saturn Fighting Action Game by Capcom
Current Release, Price TBA
Well, many apologies for the lack of Magneto action, but this single page of mutant mayhem should clue you in to the true power of the unstoppable Juggernaut!

BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN 2 PAGE 82
PlayStation 3D Fighting Action Game by Takara
Price and Availability TBA
Well, to be frank we think this game is pretty bad - however, it seems to have attracted its own legion of fans on PlayStation and in the arcades, so we reveal all of the boss-related secrets.

DOOM PAGE 96
PlayStation 3D Shooting Game by id/Williams
Current Release, Price £44.99
The third and final instalment of **MAXIMUM**'s coverage reveals the five secret levels in Doom, including the celebrated "Club Doom".

MAXIMUM ***REGULARS***

NEW GAMES... PLACES... EVENTS... PAGE 100
Well, **MAXIMUM**'s coverage of the places and events is probably a bit lacking this month, since we've been enslaved to Lord EMAP and super-glued to our desks to meet an impossible deadline. Again.

Still, the coverage of hot games remains pretty decent regardless, with Saturn WipeOut, Formula One and of course PlayStation Tekken 2 taking pride of place in the **MAXIMUM** line-up. Also worth checking out are the first pictures of Street Fighter Alpha 2 along with Virtua Fighter Kids and more on the Sonic Fighting Game.

MAXIMUM RESPONSE PAGE 136
After finally being swayed by popular opinion, **MAXIMUM** unveils its first letters page. For intelligent debate on gaming in general plus a slagging off for Killer Instinct 2, look no further.

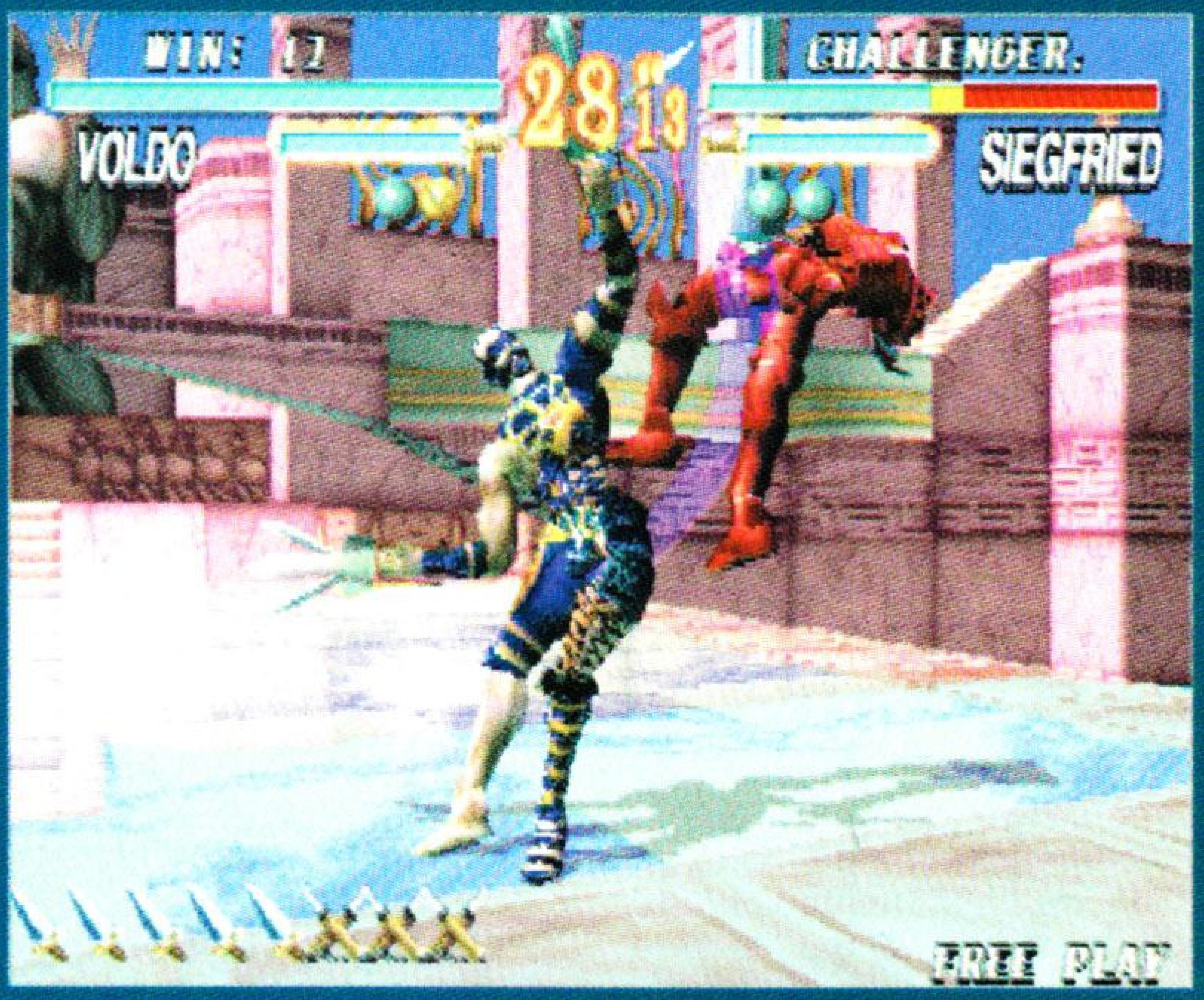
REVIEWS PAGE 137
Despite the lean times in terms of software, **MAXIMUM** retains its enormous 23-page reviewing section where we tell you in plain English whether selected software is worth buying or not. No useless "ratings" and suchlike here - just our informed opinions on the latest wares.

NEXT EDITION PAGE 162
For full details on the forthcoming Namco Special Edition of **MAXIMUM**, it could well be worth your while checking out this page. It's going to be big...

SPACE HULK ARTWORK ©ELECTRONIC ARTS 1995, 1996

By history a man becomes a soldier,
Through history a soldier becomes a hero
- From a 14th century bards' song

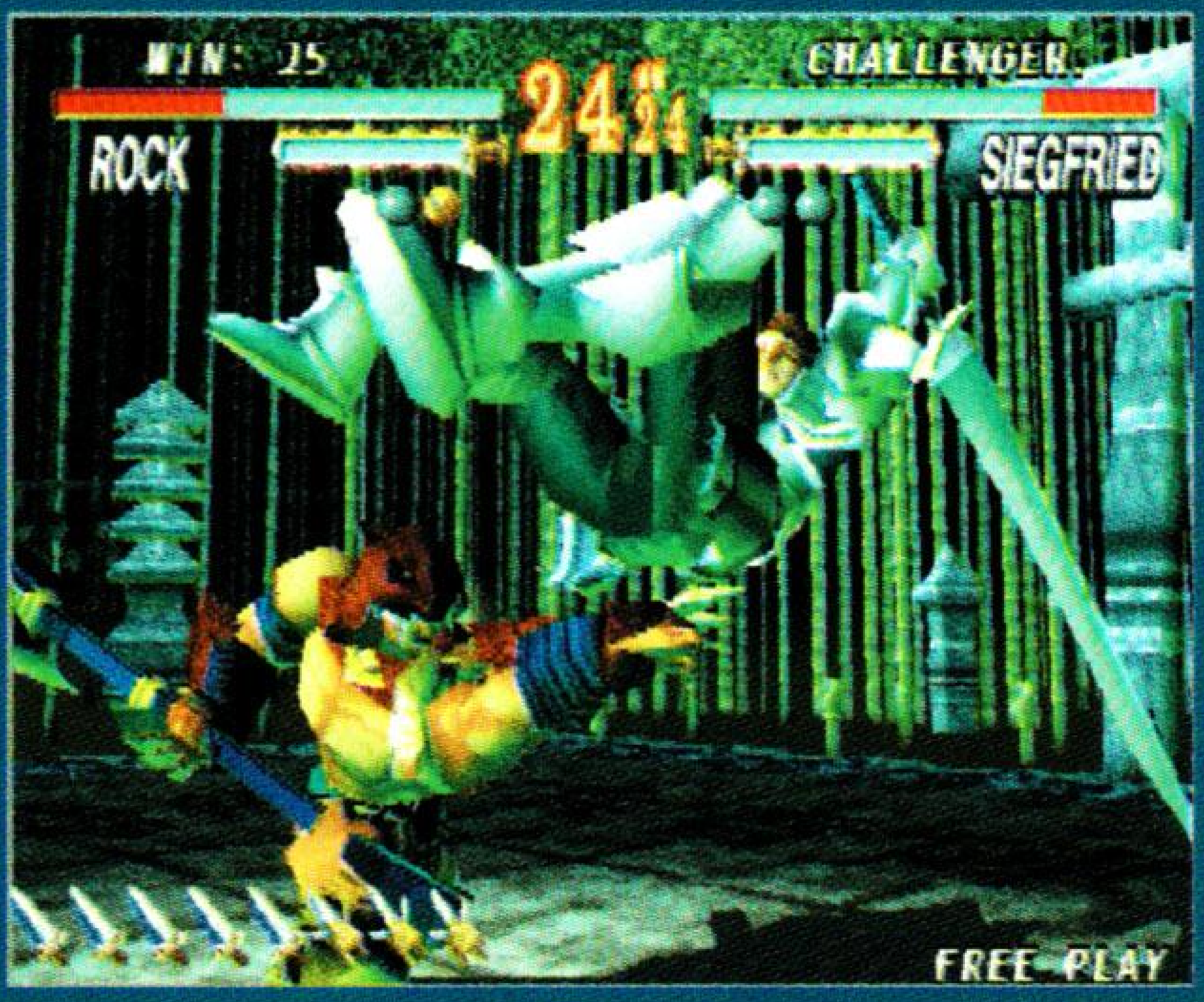
This is a tale of souls and swords,
Transcending the world and all its history,
Told for all eternity...
- Author Unknown, a tale from end of the mediaeval age



The combination king, this uppercut from Voldo is a good floating move, and can immediately be followed up with the same technique.

Since the genesis of Tekken, Namco have been at the forefront of PlayStation development. Realising at an early stage that the PlayStation hardware offered incredible 3D performance for a relatively tiny cost, Namco collaborated with Sony in taking the system into the arcades. The result was the System 11 board, with the first game being released taking the form of Tekken. Although popular in the arcades, it was unfortunate that it came out literally weeks after Sega's much-hyped Virtua Fighter 2. Ironically, the game found far more success on the PlayStation and this success helped the arcade sequel become a huge hit. Namco's third System 11 game is the graphically remarkable Soul Edge. Everyone has seen the screenshots, which take the System 11 architecture to even greater heights of visual sophistication, but is the game really *good*?

Rock demonstrates his enviable throwing abilities with a hurl that sends the armoured Siegfried flying. Note the stunning light-sourcing on this stage.



Early reviews in the UK press (which by the way were taken from a 50% complete Soul Edge board on location test in the Namco WonderPark in London) would appear to be quite negative. At the recent ATEI show, **MAXIMUM** was incredibly keen to see the near-final game and we came away extremely impressed with what Namco have achieved.

The best games to compare Soul Edge with are Battle Arena Toshinden 2 and Sega's new Fighting Vipers. All three games are 3D fighting titles, featuring weapons as well as the usual fisticuffs action and all of them (bar Toshinden) are excellent games. However, in pure gameplay terms, Soul Edge is the only game where the weapons really make a great difference. It's the only game of the three which is innovative *because* of the weapons.

As an example of Namco's mastery of the System 11 board, Soul Edge is without compare. Toshinden 2 runs at the same frame rate, but lacks any of the visual refinements and awesome graphical effects that Namco have mastered. **MAXIMUM** definitely recommends Soul Edge as a hot arcade contender, and in the last few weeks Namco have finally confirmed that the game *will* be converted onto the PlayStation by the end of the year. If the results are as close as Tekken and its sequel, it seems that Namco's reputation for quality PlayStation products will remain unassailable.

Fight to possess the SOUL EDGE - The ultimate weapon with the power to destroy every living thing!

WIN: 6
22 08
CHALLENGER.
SIEGFRIED
TAKI

SYSTEM 11 GRAPHICAL EXCESSES

34 59
SOPHITIA

Both Tekken and its sequel run at a super-smooth 60 frames per second - it would be impossible for these games to appear any more fluid and life-like than they are already. However, for Soul Edge, Namco have taken a risk by settling for a frame rate half that of its previous System 11 games. Like the aged Virtua Fighter and the rubbish Toshinden 2, it runs at 30 frames a second. Initially it has to be said that the game looks quite jerky - it takes a short while to get the hang of the motion capture running at that reduced frame rate.

Some might say that the risk has paid off. Since the System 11 board has twice the amount of time to update the screen, in theory it can make those visuals twice as detailed. In practice, it makes for one hell of a good looking game - way beyond the impressive visuals of Tekken 2.

21 61
CHALLENGER.
SOPHITIA
ROCK

As you can tell from the screenshots, Geese is back with greater power than ever before! Central to Mr Howard's combat prowess is his Rising Sword.

WIN: 15
14 90
CHALLENGER.
LI LONG
VOLDO
FREE PLAY

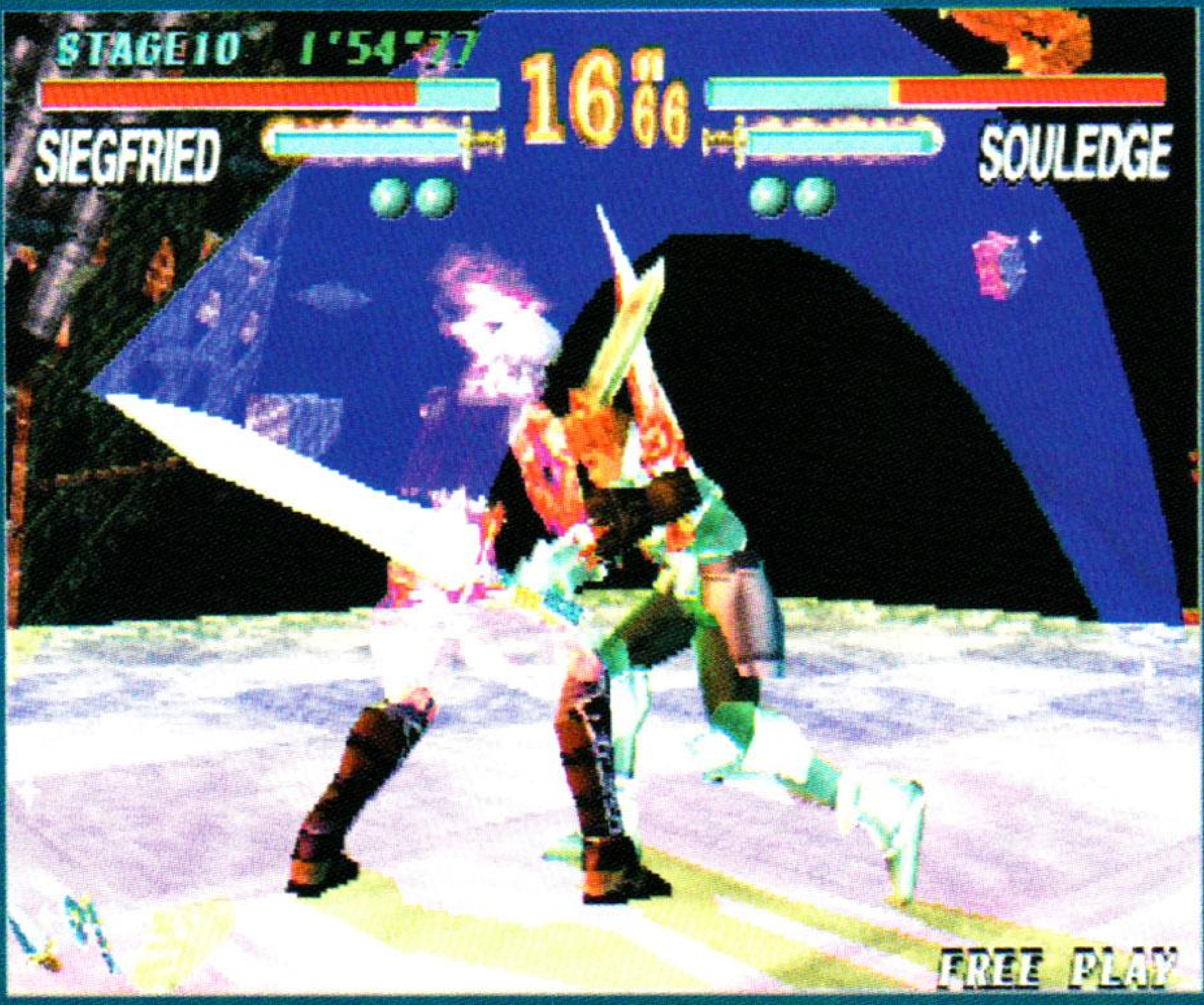
The characters themselves are supremely detailed (it's about here that you realise just how much of a disappointment Toshinden 2 is) and feature some of the most amazing light-sourcing seen in a video game yet. If you thought Tekken 2's lighting was good, Soul Edge is likely to come as a most pleasant surprise. Adding to the effect is that just like Ridge Racer Revolution, the game cycles quite quickly through day and night on some stages, really showing off the effects. Add all this to true-3D backdrops (Tekken's were flat 2D parallax scrolling) and some stunning-looking effects (such as the cornfield) and Soul Edge more than holds its own against the competition.

E-MOTION CAPTURE

As is the trend in recent fighting games, Soul Edge uses motion capture to add extra levels of realism to the action. This is especially effective in this particular game because it isn't just punches and kicks - obviously real skill is needed to use weapons such as nunchuka, and this is reflected in the movement of the game. Since the weapons based combat is the main draw of Soul Edge, it's clear

SOUL EDGE

STAGE 10
LI LONG
VS
SOULEDGE



The final boss: the dread Soul Edge himself! Possessed by the spirit of the demon blade, his attacks are rampantly damaging on a grand scale.

that Namco put in a great deal of effort in getting the look of the combat just right. Although arcade gamers are used to smoother motion capture (helped by higher frame rates), Soul Edge still manages to look fantastic.

THE GUARD IMPACT SYSTEM

In fighting games to date, guarding has typically involved either pulling back or pressing a button to cut out or reduce damage from an opponent's onslaught. Soul Edge expands upon this system greatly, adding to the game's strategies.

All of the fighters bar Taki and Li Long use their weapons to guard, and this results in damage being taken. Once the weapon power bar has gone, the fighter's primary means of attack is sent flying (it is given back at the beginning of the next round), resulting in the player having to use new tactics. The characters who don't use weapons for blocking take small amounts of damage from the main energy bar.

Also new is the weapon-repel feature. If you press the guard button at just the right moment as the opponent's weapon makes contact, your foe staggers back for a short time, allowing you to regain the initiative. There are even some "counter combo" moves to figure out from this position. If you don't press guard at the right moment, Soul Edge uses the same system as previous fighting games. There is a small amount of "guard freeze" recovery time before you can use your weapon as your foe makes contact.

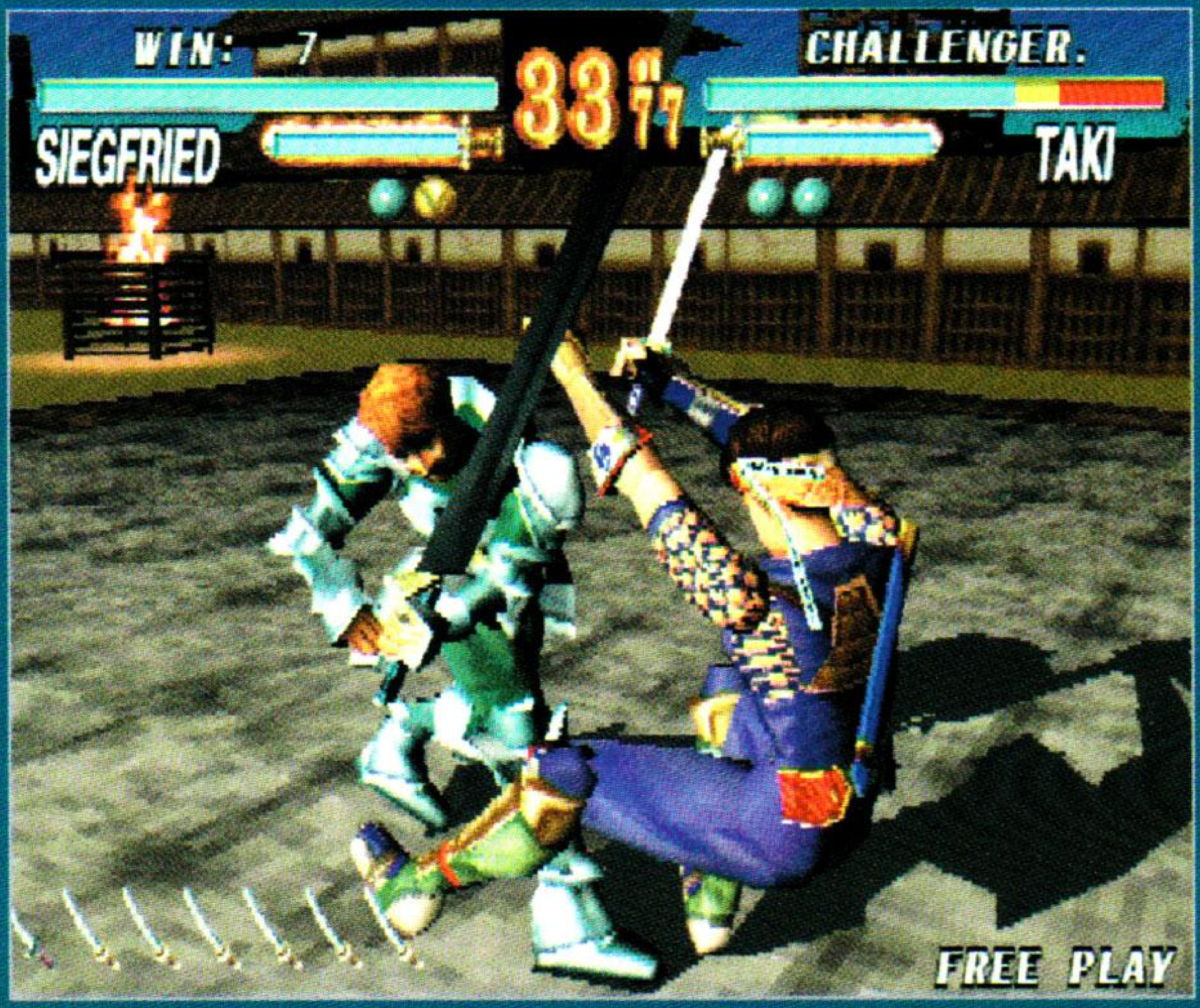
UNIQUE 'GUARD IMPACT' SYSTEM ALLOWS YOU TO DISARM YOUR OPPONENT! WEAPONLESS FIGHTERS MUST USE FISTS AND KICKS TO WIN THE BATTLE!

WIN: 3
14"20
CHALLENGER.
MITSURUGI
LI LONG
FREE PLAY

LOW, MID OR HIGH? THE SOUL EDGE BLOCKING SYSTEM

Although the Guard Impact system shows some innovation in the art of blocking, the actual algorithms behind judging whether a hit connects or not remains the same as in other fighting games such as Virtua Fighter or Tekken. Hits connect on one of three levels - low, mid-body, or high. Standing guards protect against mid-body and high strikes, whilst crouching guards protect against low blows only. So, when you read about the effectiveness of the character's combinations and special moves later, you should have some idea of how to protect yourself should you be on the receiving end of these attacks.

Siegfried throws an unprepared Taki, sending the shapely lass flying. The dramatic camera angles are reminiscent of Toshinden...



THROWING IN SOUL EDGE

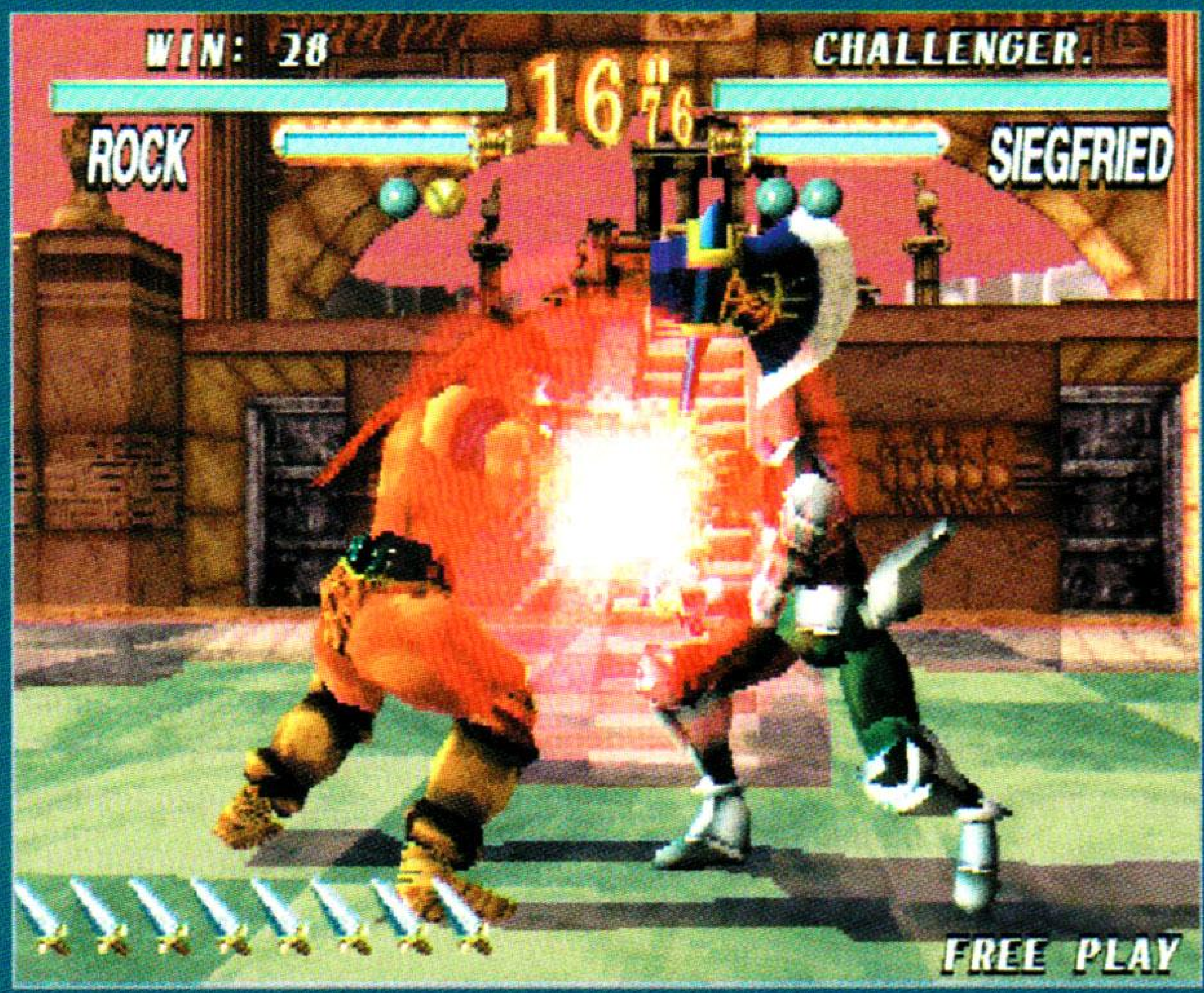
Throws provided some of the most spectacular moments in Tekken and Tekken 2, and it's clear that Namco see this as being quite successful as the means for throwing and the resulting effects are very similar to their execution in the previous System 11 games. Holding down guard along with either vertical or horizontal attack buttons produces one of two throws. Every character appears to have at least two techniques like this, and just like Tekken, these moves are accompanied by some extremely dramatic close-up camera angles. Excellent stuff. It's worth noting that different throws are used by the fighters when they lose their weaponry (although the fighters seem to share the same throws in these circumstances). Also, throws can be reversed as in Tekken 2 - if both fighters attempt to throw at the same point, both fighters are in for a disappointment...

POUNCING FOLLOW-UPS

These attacks are seemingly the one constant in the arena of 3D fighting games. Once an opponent is decked in Soul Edge, you can "pounce" on the prone foe by using up in conjunction with either the vertical or horizontal attack buttons. As is the case in previous games, each attack takes a different amount of time to connect. Find out which is shorter and use this for weak knock-downs. For truly powerful decking manoeuvres, opt to follow-up with the longer (and thus more damaging) technique. As is the case in the new Fighting Vipers, a failed pounce takes some while to recover from, leaving the pouncer in a vulnerable position.

ALL-FIGHTER PREVIEW

In what must be one of the largest Extended Plays to date, **MAXIMUM** goes in-depth on every player-controlled fighter available in Soul Edge over the next 16 pages.



If two characters dash at one another, they collide, resulting in a desperate grapple as both fighters struggle to push over the other.

THE NEW WEAPONS COMBAT SYSTEM

Namco helped revolutionise 3D fighting games by having a button used for each limb of their fighters in the Tekken series. Since weapons are the main basis for the fighting in Soul Edge, Namco have moved on. Four buttons are still used (presumably to keep the conversion to PlayStation simple), but their uses are entirely different.

1. Guard
Pulling back in Tekken was all that was required to guard. In Soul Edge, the button nearest the stick is used. All characters, save Taki, Li Long and Bold use their weapons to guard and a small energy meter gauges the "wear and tear" your weapon has sustained. See the "Guard Impact" system for more information.

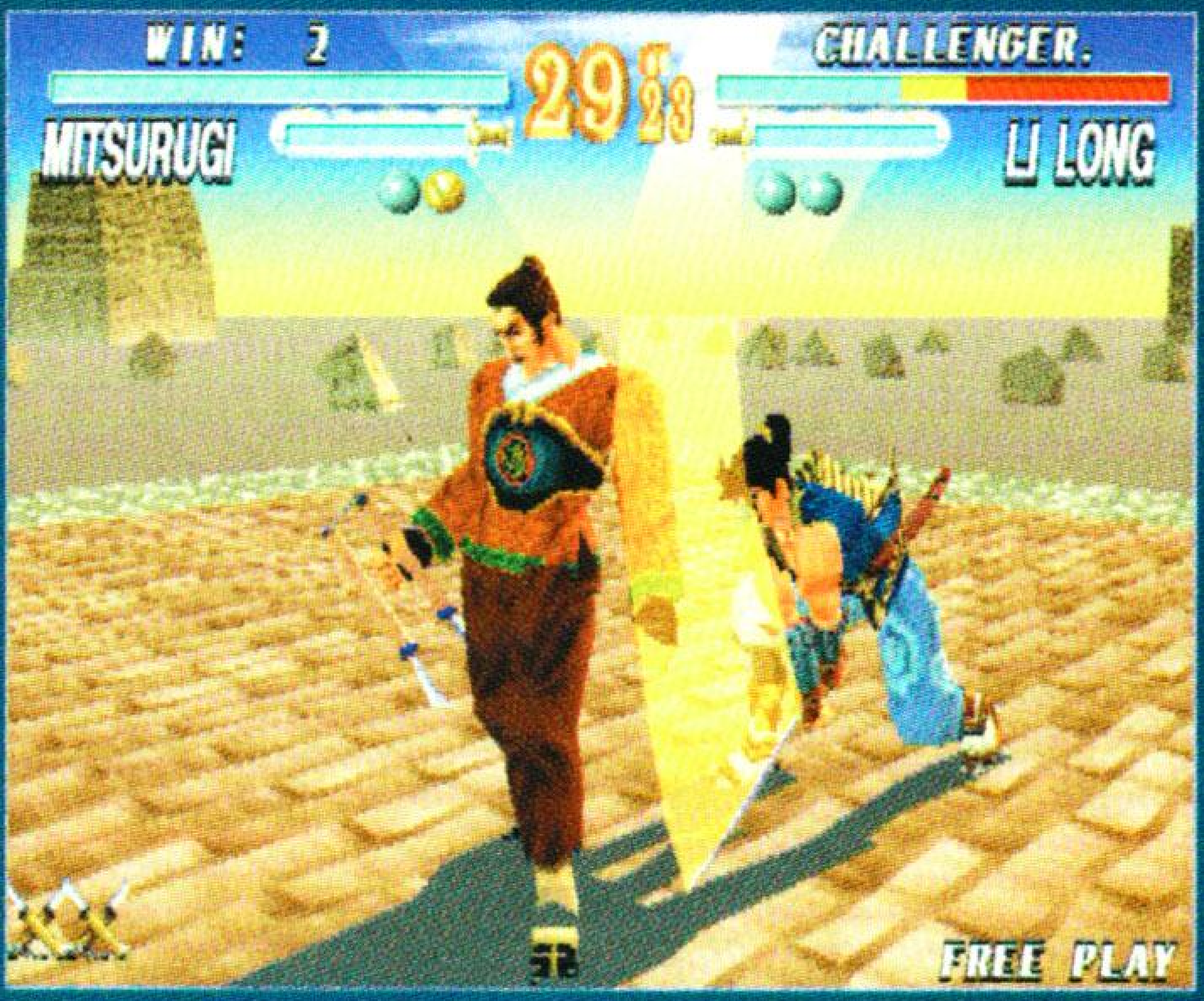
2. Horizontal Attack
A horizontal swipe from your weapon results from pressing this button.

3. Vertical Attack
Unsurprisingly, a vertical swipe is unleashed here. Using the two buttons, you can figure out effective combination attacks that can cut through an opponent's guarding techniques like a hot knife through butter.

4. Kick
Since the characters' hands are kept occupied by their weaponry, this button enables you to use your legs to strike. Most of the game's combos are used with the vertical and horizontal attack buttons, although some characters can also use kicks in their continual attacks.

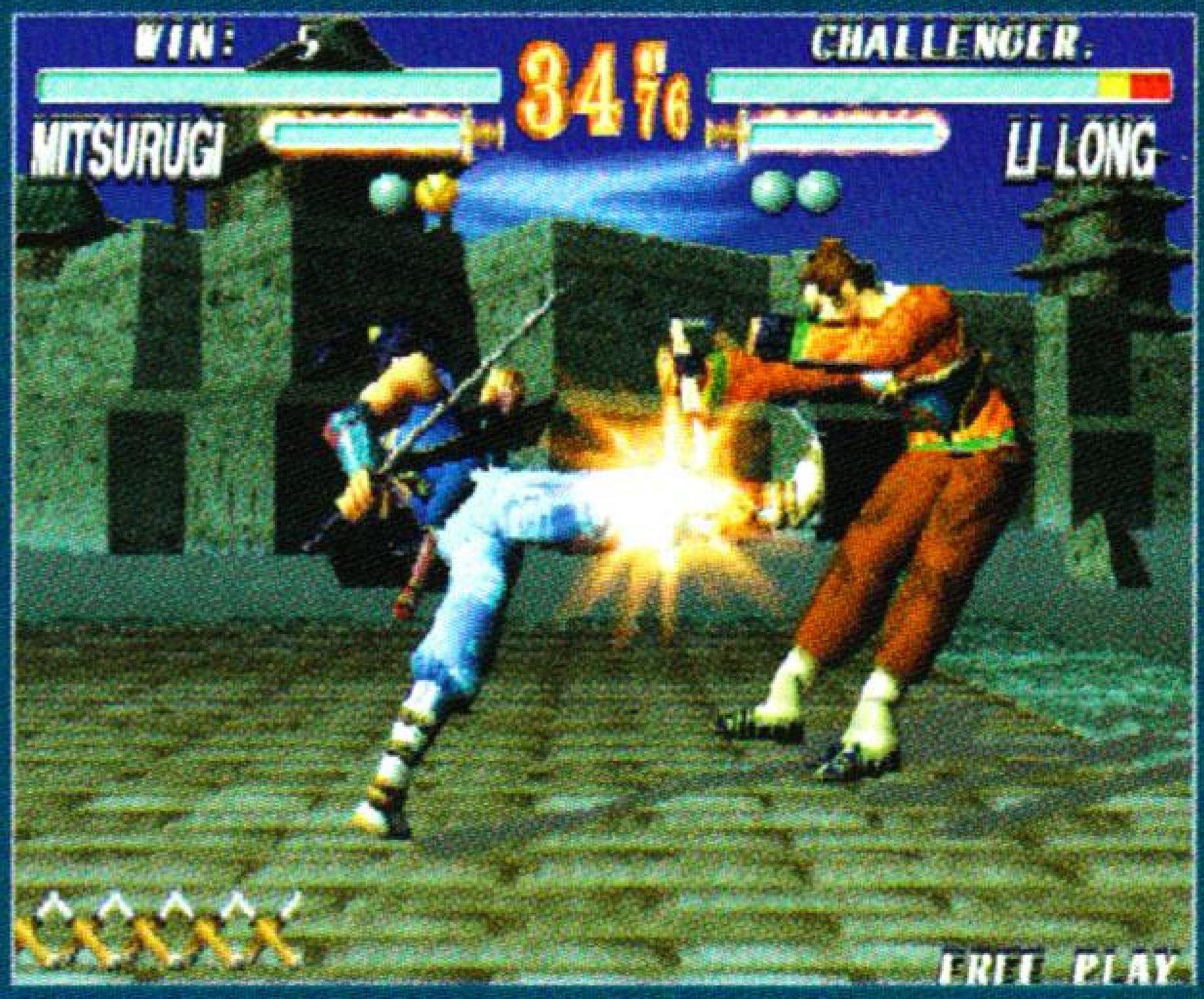
MITSURUGI

THE LONE FENCER! MERCENARY OF THE WARRING KINGDOM

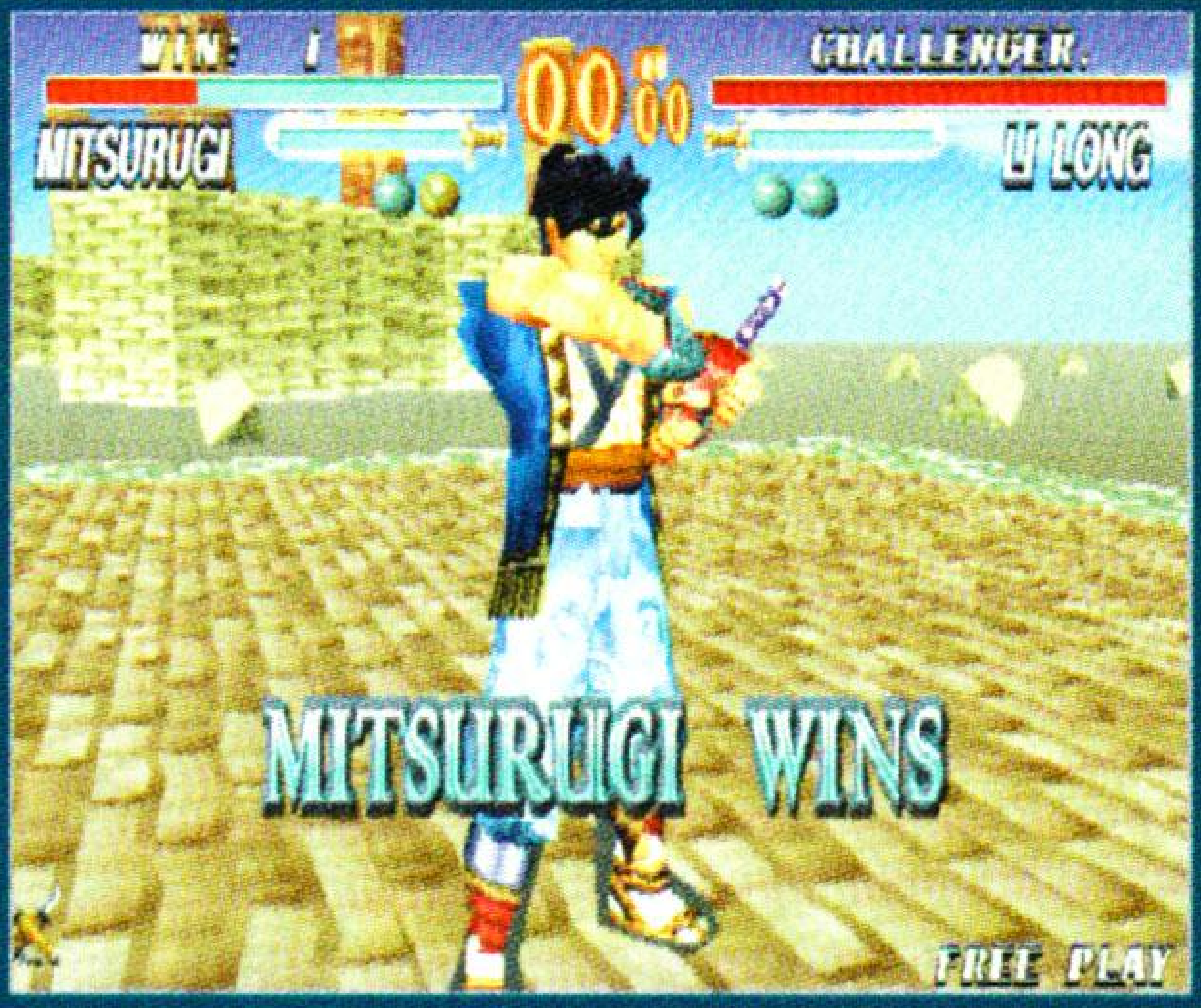


MITSURUGI
LI LONG

Full Name Mitsurugi Seishiro
Age 22, born June 8
Height 5'6" (168cm)
Weight 59kg
Blood Type AB
Family Parents and brothers deceased
Weaponry Player one: 'Korefuji' Player two: 'Sakaki'
Discipline Tenpu-Shinsai school
Stage 'Noshima-Jo' castle



"THAT'S IT! THE SOUL EDGE SWORD MUST BE FAR STRONGER THAN THE RIFLE!"

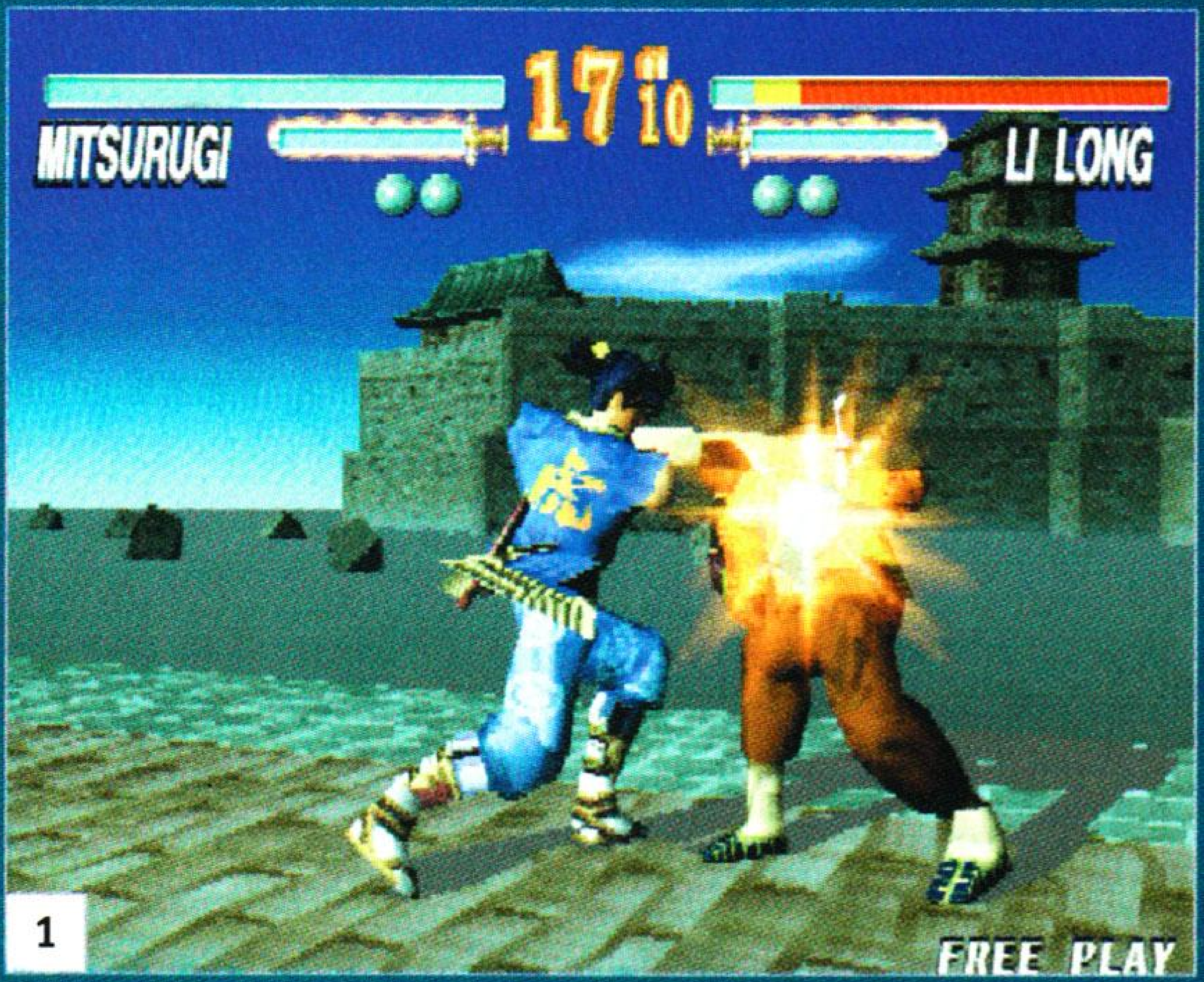


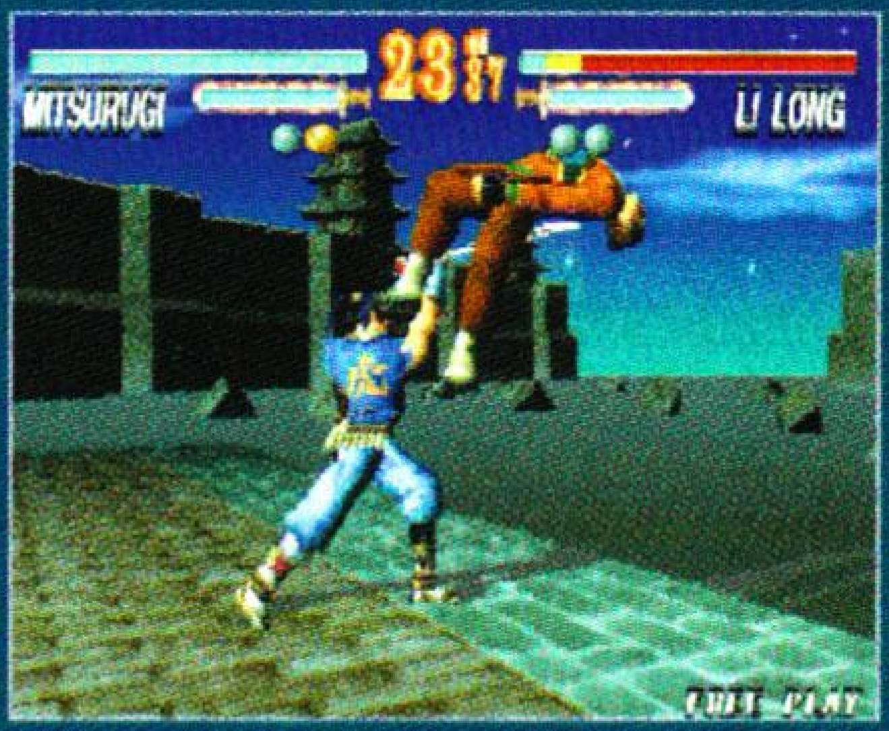
In the mediaeval era, there was not a swordsman to match Misurugi Seishiro - the undisputed blademaster of Japan, whose very presence inspired awe from generals and adoration from fellow fencers. However, he started life as a peasant in Bizen - a province in west Japan. Relishing the life of the farmer, war eventually overtook the land and Mitsurugi replaced his hoe for katana blades.

His finely honed muscles helped gain him a fearsome reputation to his skill in attacking mountain fortresses. As his skills grew, Mitsurugi became a mercenary for hire charged with a level of confidence and power that trampled over all opponents... Until a flint-lock rifle drifted ashore n a southern island of Japan. The design was soon copied and Mitsurugi found himself up against an all-powerful enemy - gunpower was replacing the skills of the swordsmen. When he heard rumours of the all-powerful Soul Edge sword, he almost jumped for joy...

Mitsurugi is an adept of the Tenpu-Shinsai of fighting. This is based around his beloved sword, which never leaves his side. Namco have described him as the "hero" character of Soul Edge, which usually means that he is quite simple to learn, but not that exciting (a la Jacky from Virtua Fighter). However, he has a number of incredible moves which are sure to elevate him from the dull ranks of the "easy for the novice to master" fighters.

A rather fine shot below of the Comma Hook, which slices effectively right into Li Long's features, backed by a suitably excellent visual effect.





Mitsurugi initiates one of his floating techniques, sending opponent Li Long into the air. The classy victory pose shot is above.

1. COMMA-HOOK

A simple triple-A button combination attack, Mitsurugi rushes forward making three distinct slashes with his sword. The first button press produces a side cut - this is pretty fast and is a good counter-move when guarding. It slides effortlessly into the second attack, which is not easily blocked, but the time taken with the third strike does give Mitsurugi's foes time to react and thus block. This is Mitsurugi's most basic technique and can score up to three hits - all of them high. As an opening gambit, it's pretty predictable and easily guarded against.

2. PERFORMING KAGURA

Based around the sacred Shinto music and dancing, this move is easily activated with two A button presses followed up by a B button strike. As with the Comma Hook, the first two attacks chain into a combination,

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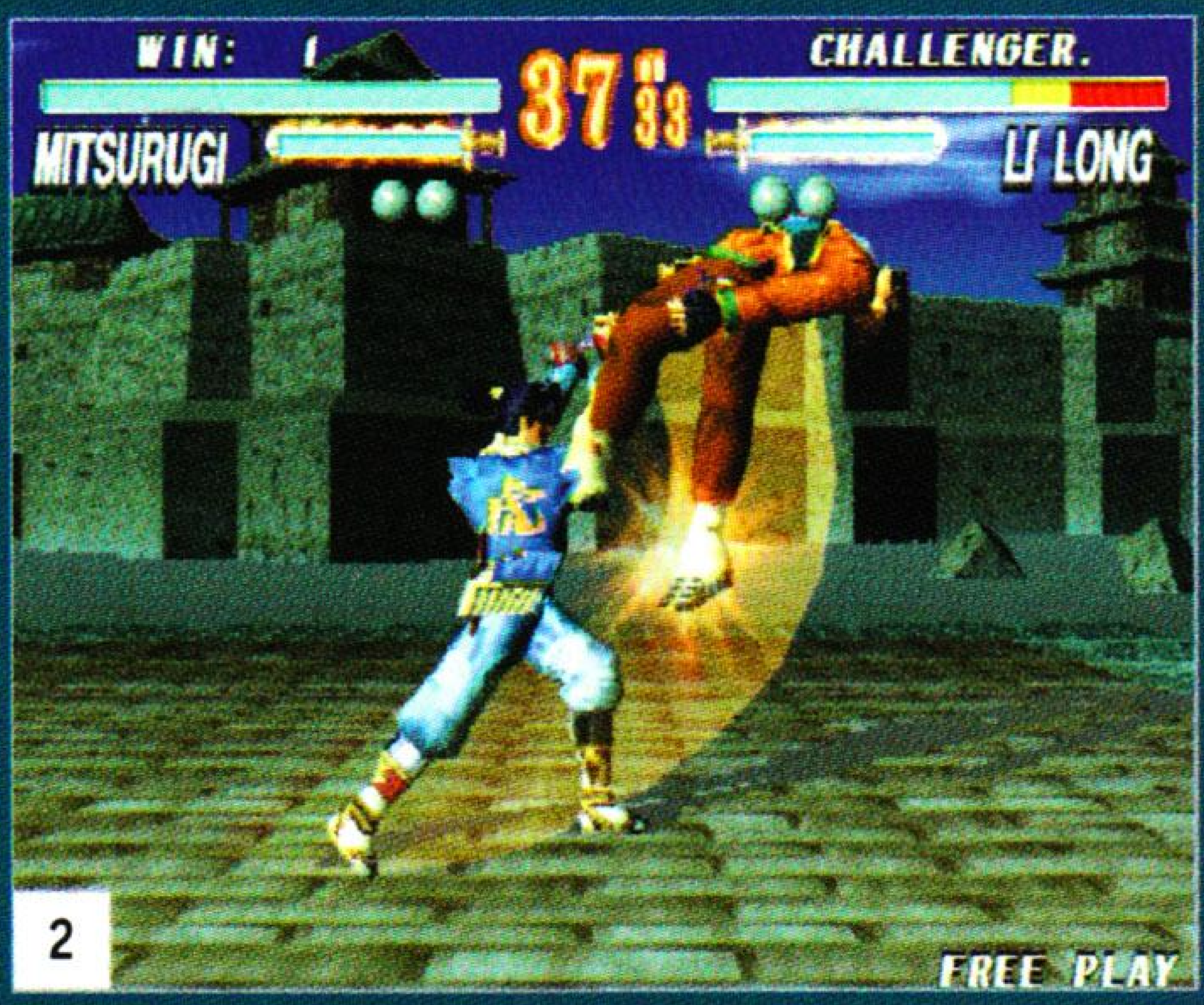
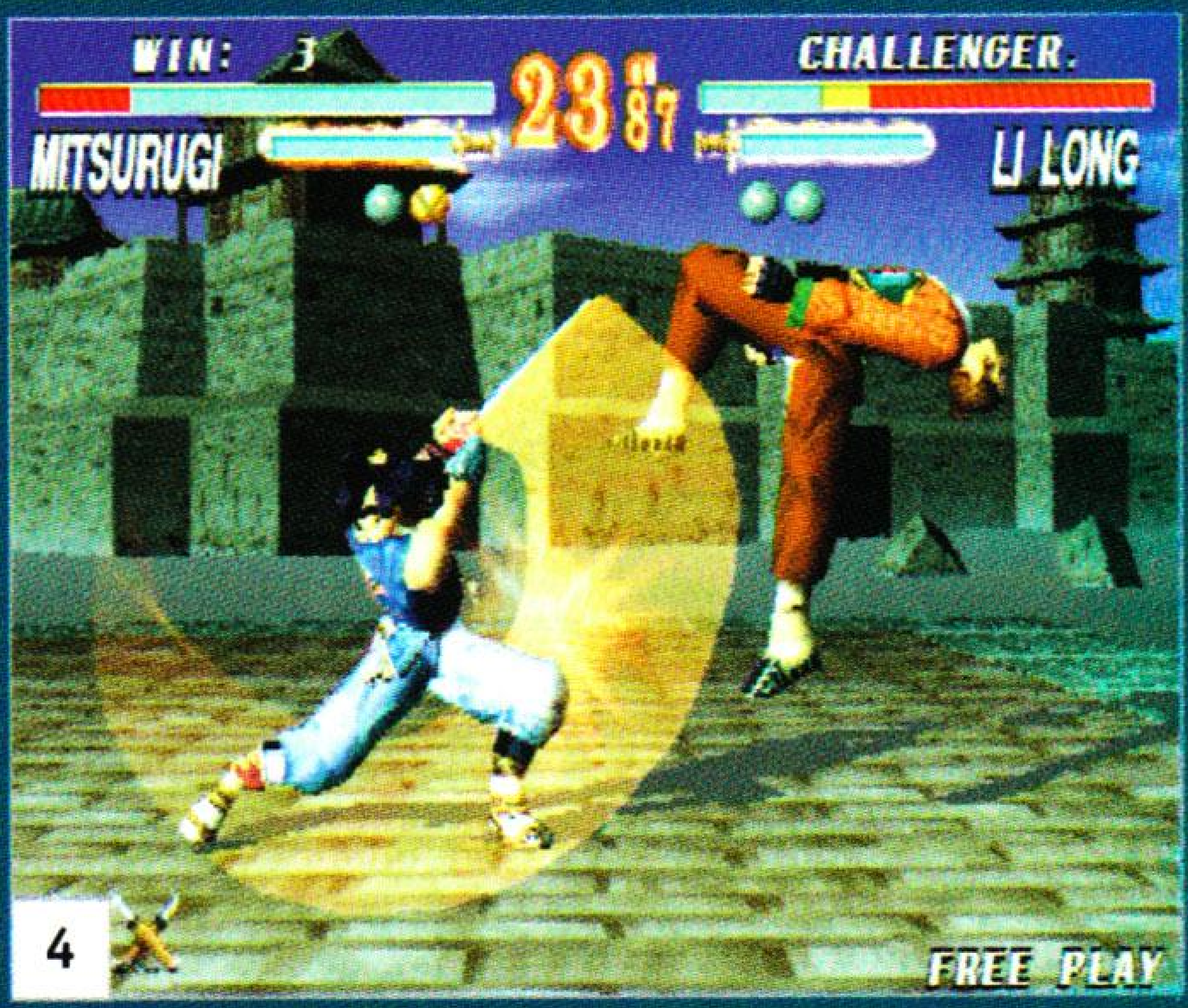
SWORDSMAN AND FORWARD STORMER OF THE URAGAMI



2

whilst the third doesn't - meaning that it can be blocked and quite easily countered against using the Guard Impact technique discussed earlier on. If successful, the Performing Kagura scores three hits - two high, one mid-level.



4

3. Empty Kagura

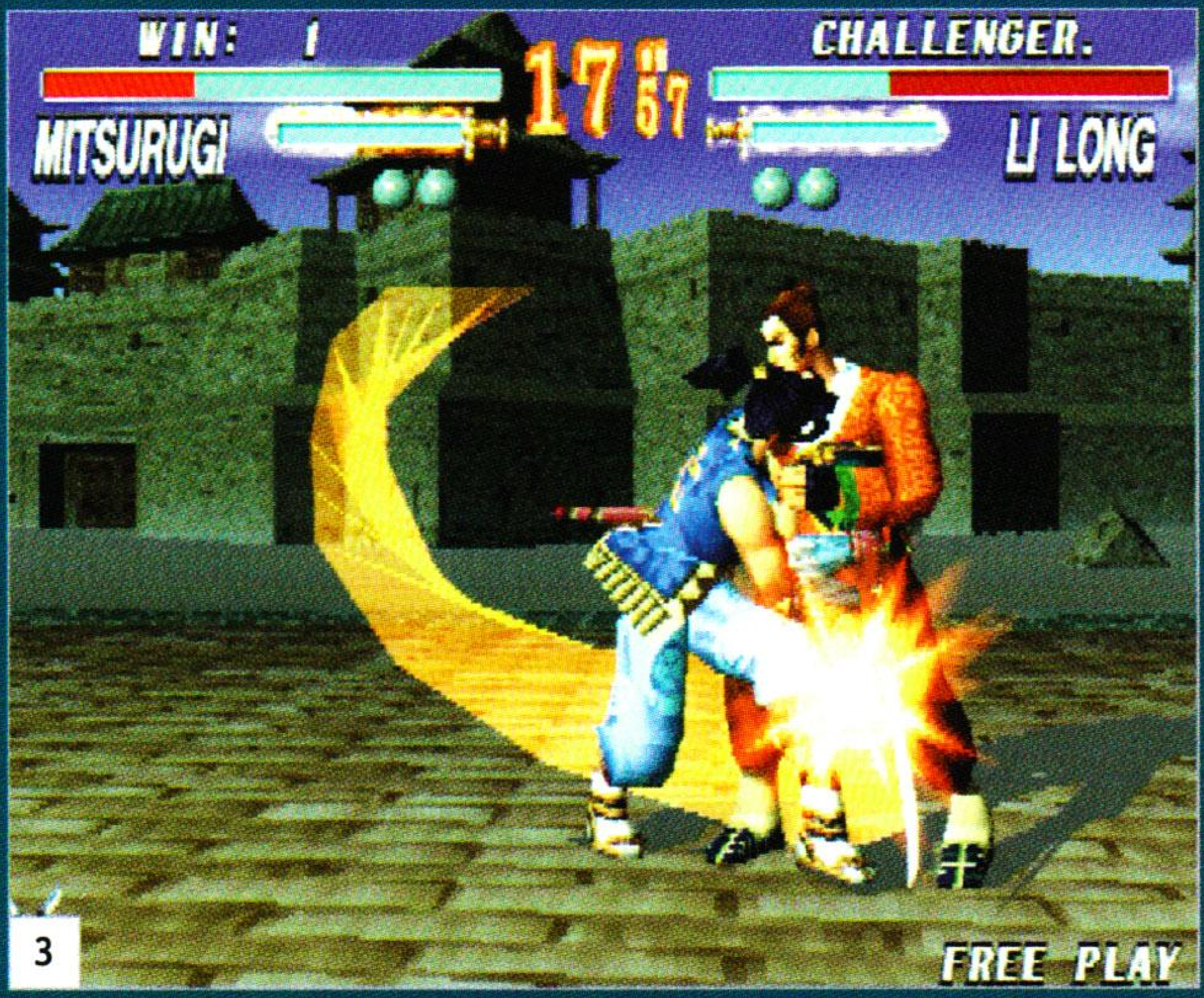
Another of three attacks based around Shinto movements, the Empty Kagura is a simple one-hit attack that is pretty successful at catching human opponents out. Because of its wide-sweeping motion, it has plenty of range and it's also a knock-down move, meaning that it's easy to follow up. It's a simple to master, quite annoying mid-level attack.

4. Hazy Kagura

The last of the sacred Shinto-derived attacks is the Hazy Kagura, produced by pressing both vertical and horizontal buttons down simultaneously. Like a lot moves produced this way, its build-up time is quite long, meaning that an opponent can take precautionary measures during this time. However, if it hits, you score twice at the mid-body level.

5. Wind Hole

This isn't exactly the most damaging or useful attack in Mitsurugi's repertoire, stabbing quickly forward. This means it's pretty good against a relentlessly advancing opponent, but if you're after massive damage, look elsewhere. Its speed does offer some small use as a counter-strike, but it's not Mitsurugi's best move by any stretch of the imagination.



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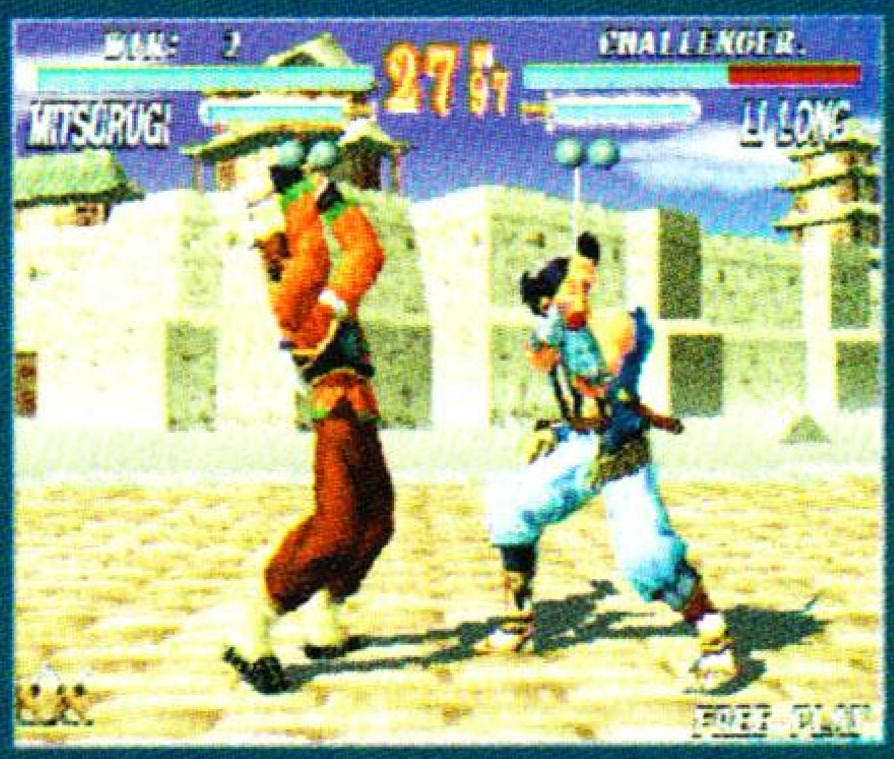
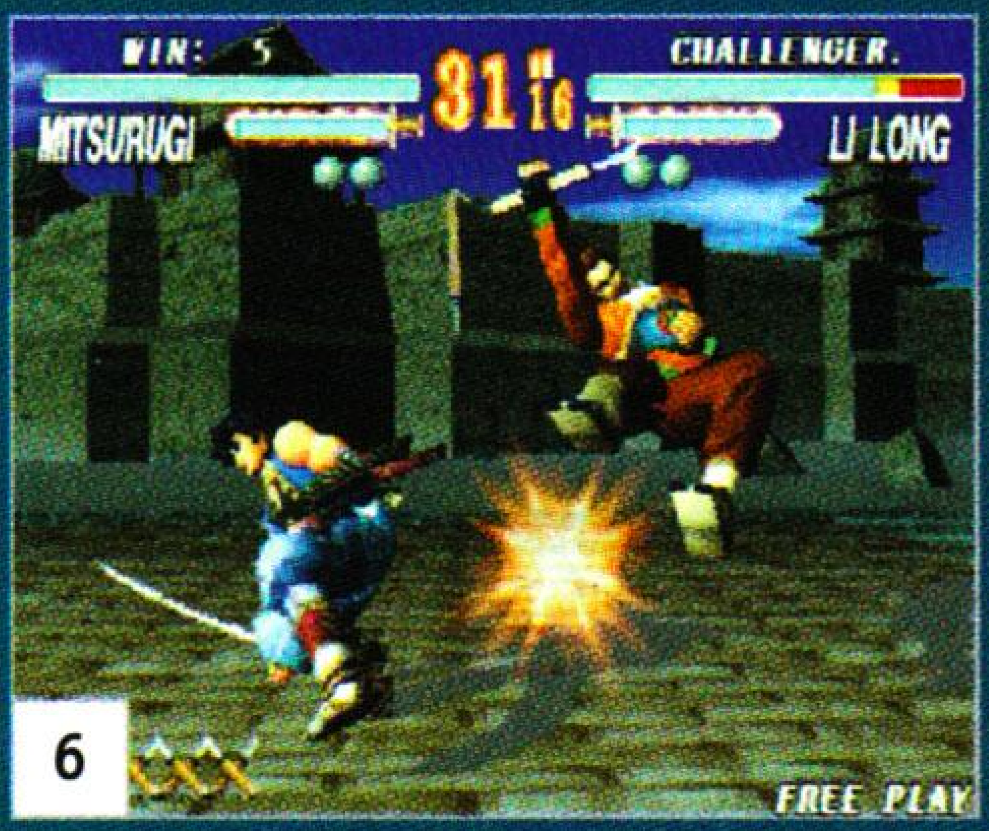


[1]FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL IN THE BIZEN CIVIL WARS!

[2]FIND THE SOUL EDGE TO BETTER THE DESTRUCTIVE FORCE OF THE 'TANE-GA-SHIMA' RIFLE!

[3]DEFEND THE 'NOSHIMA-JO' CASTLE FROM THE PIRATES OF THE DAIMYO MORI!



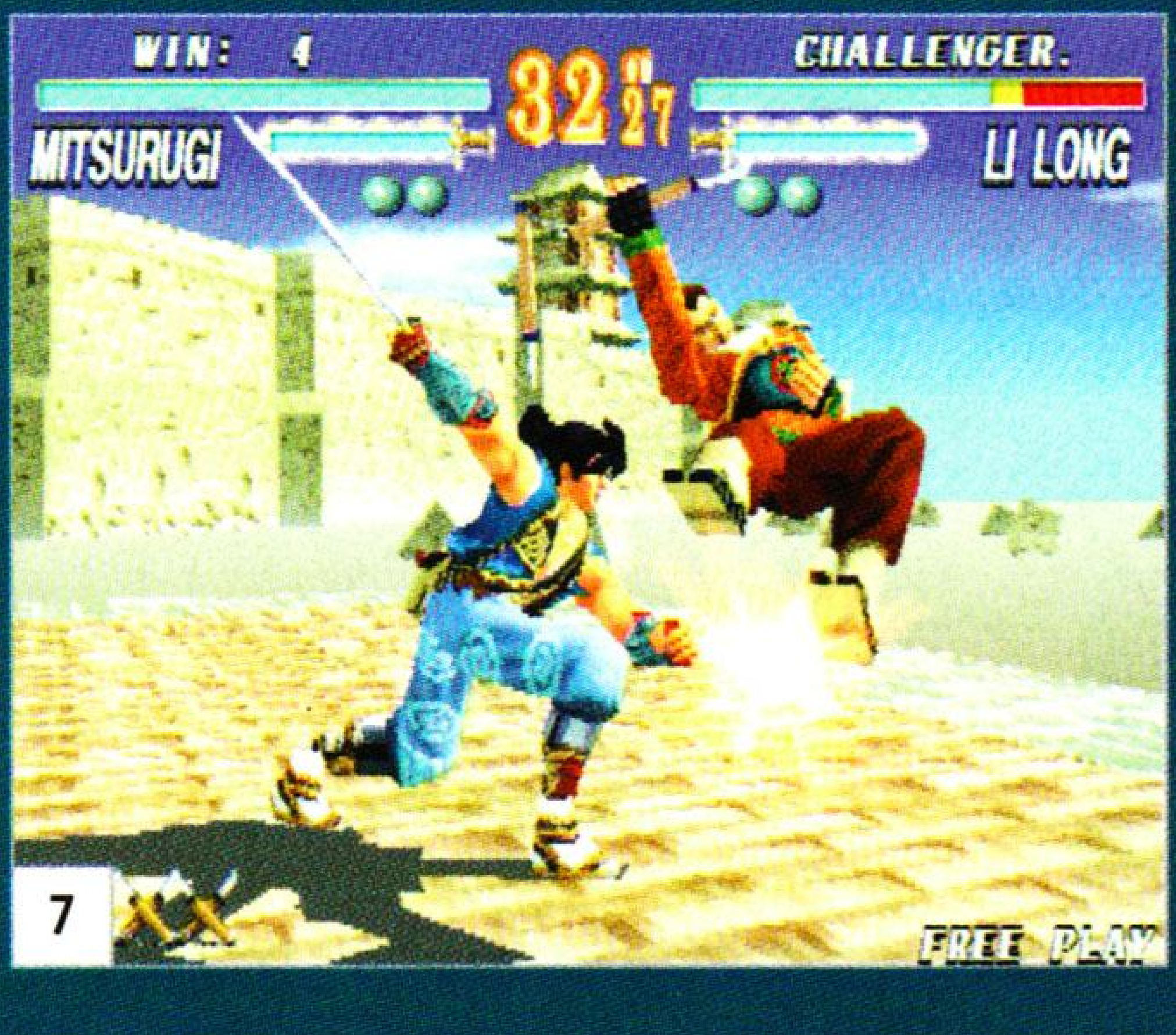
6

6. Rice-Ear Cutting

Mitsurugi's range of attacks includes a number of sneaky manoeuvres that if held in reserve can surprise and upset his foes. The Rice-Ear Cutting technique is such a manoeuvre. The kick part of the attack trips the opponent over (a low attack) and he immediately combos with a rising swipe (mid-body). The attacking levels of this technique make it difficult to effectively guard against.

7. Shin Whirl

This another two-pronged attack from Mitsurugi that looks pretty decent, but doesn't really bite that deeply into your foe's defence. The first move is a body spin, followed immediately by a foot sweep. It's pretty decent when used at range against a foe with little energy, but the fact that it doesn't inflict that much damage and that it doesn't down the opponent limits its use.



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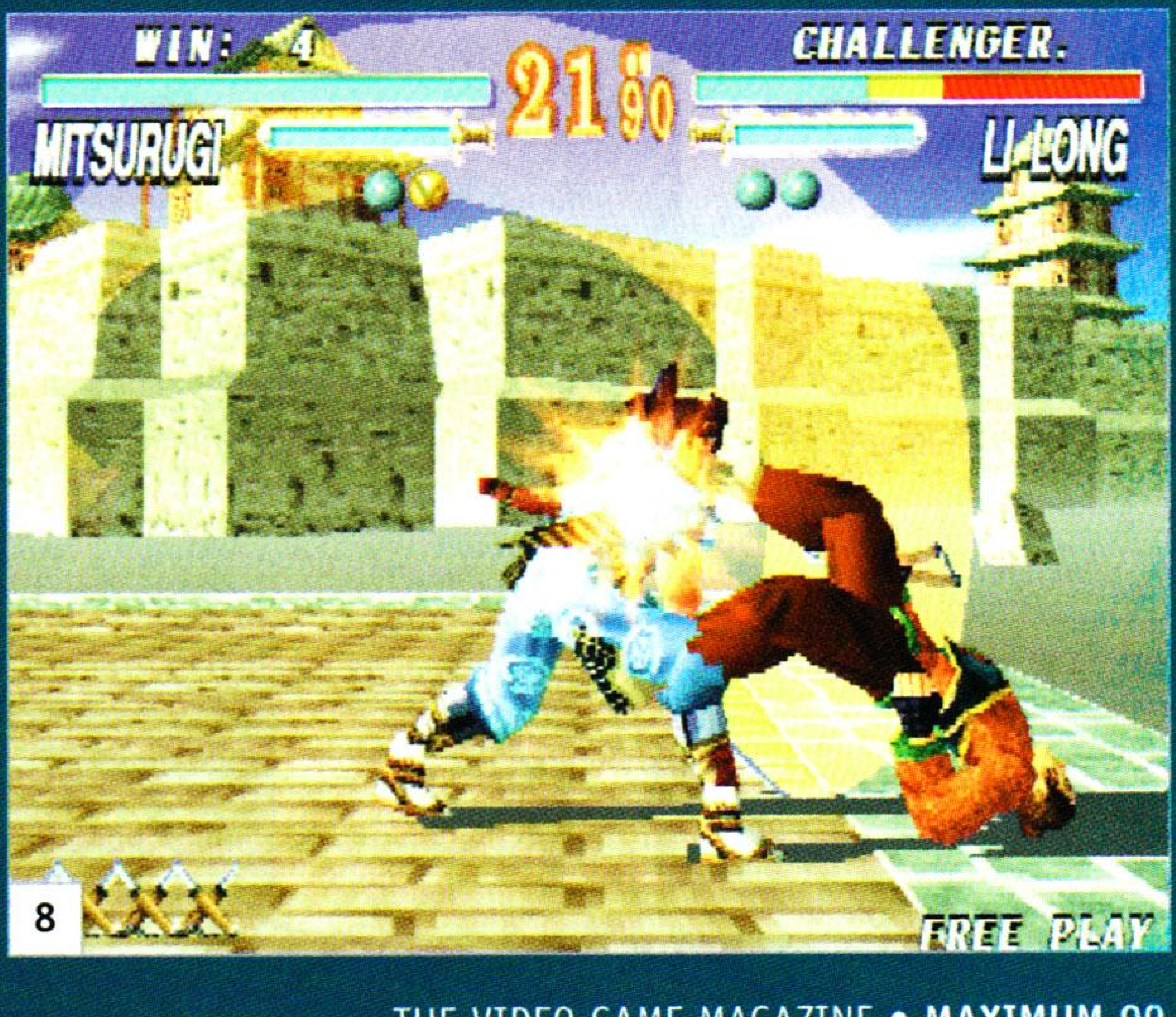
8. Fiery Howl

It is moves such as this that show the graphical excesses Namco have included with the more spectacular attacks in Soul Edge. A flaming attack issues forth from Mitsurugi's mystical sword, inflicting powerful levels of damage on his foe's energy bar. If it doesn't hit, Mitsurugi is left wide open to a counter-strike, but fortunately, it isn't so slow to actually power-up. A recommended attack against rising opponents.

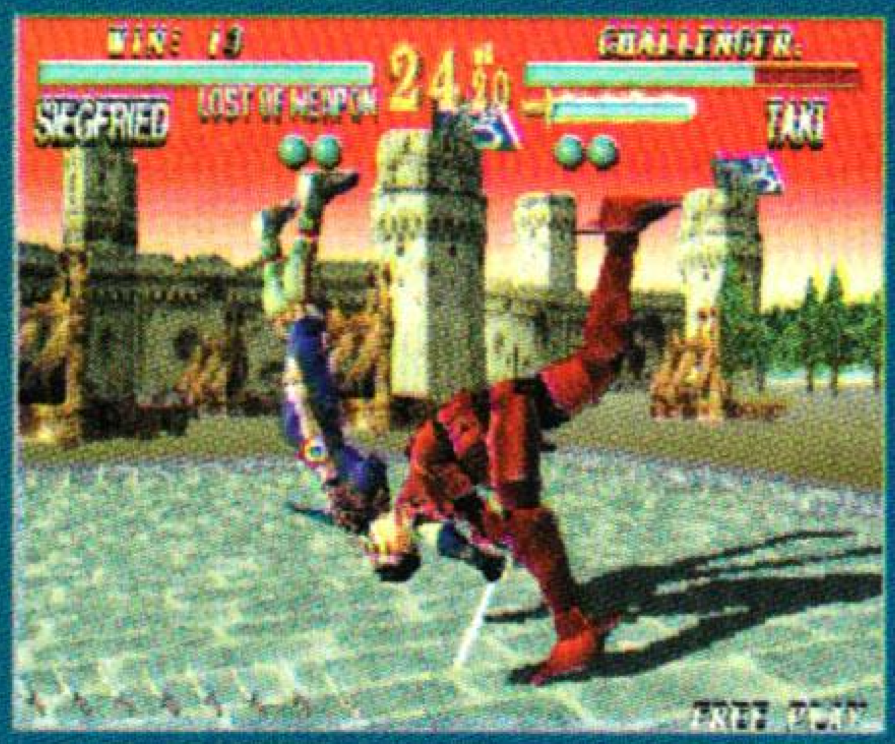


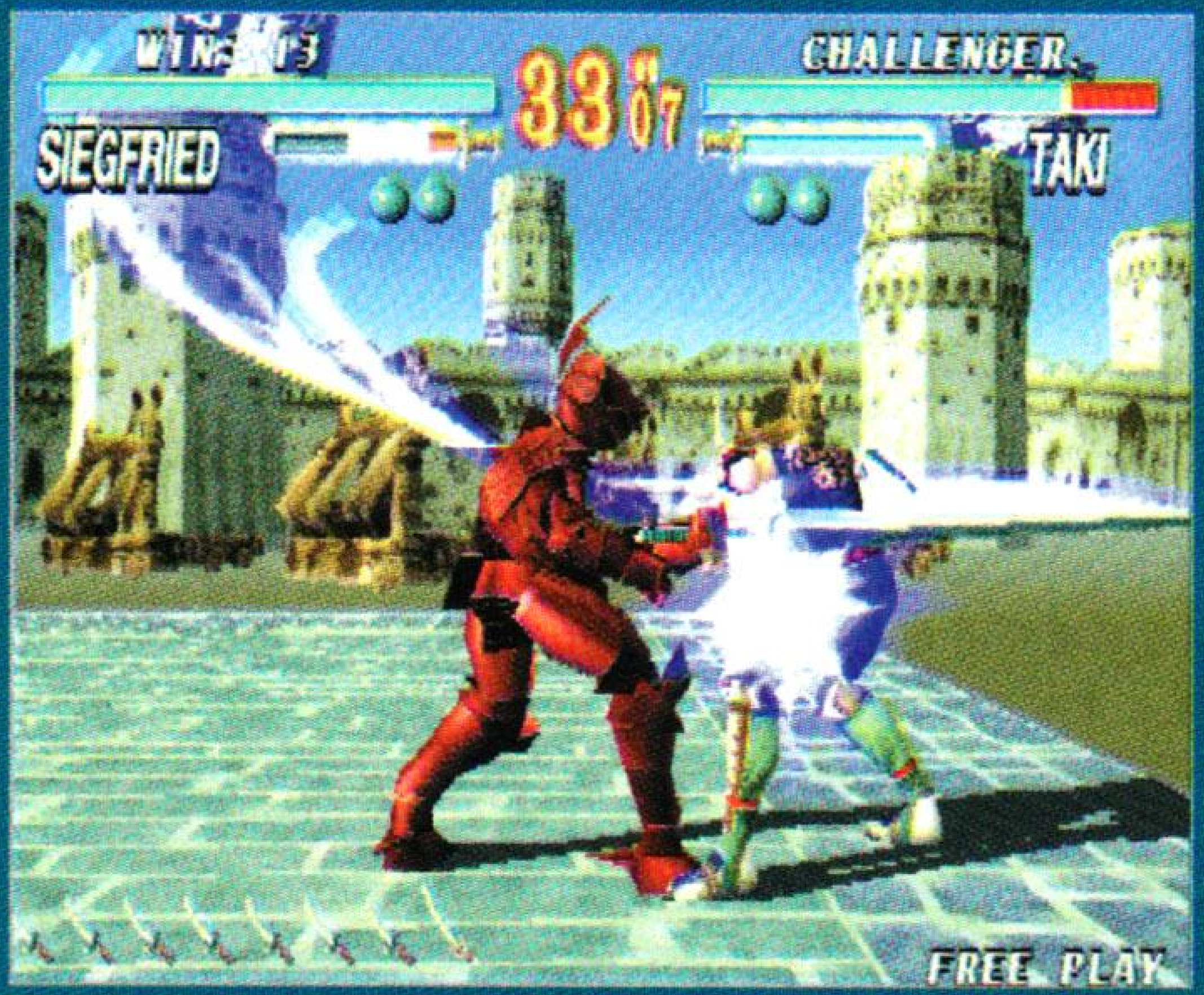
8

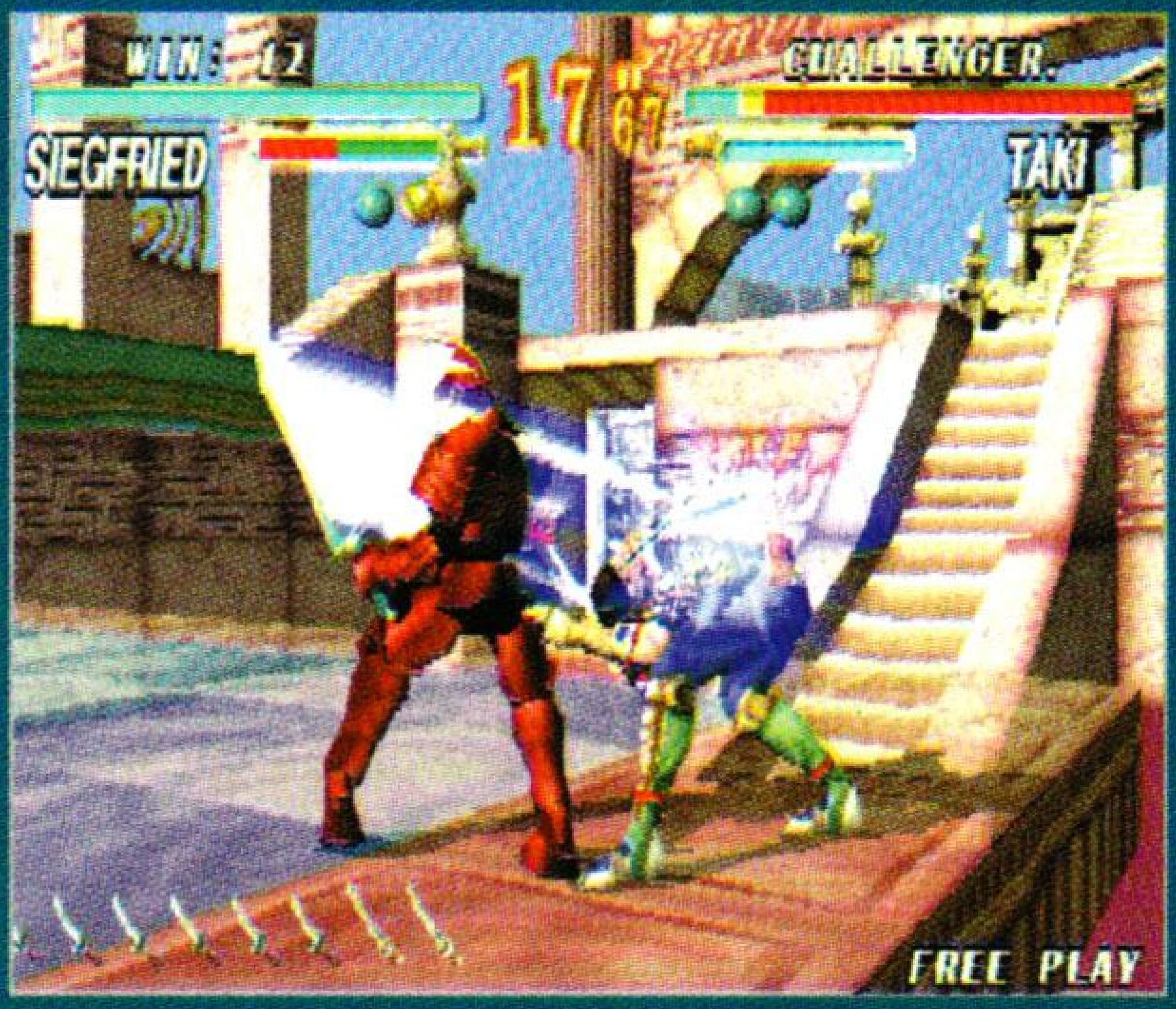
SIEGFRIED

THE EXPERT GERMAN SWORDSLINGER!

The shot below shows one of the throws Siegfried is capable of producing having lost his "Zwei-Hander" sword. You get it back in the next round.

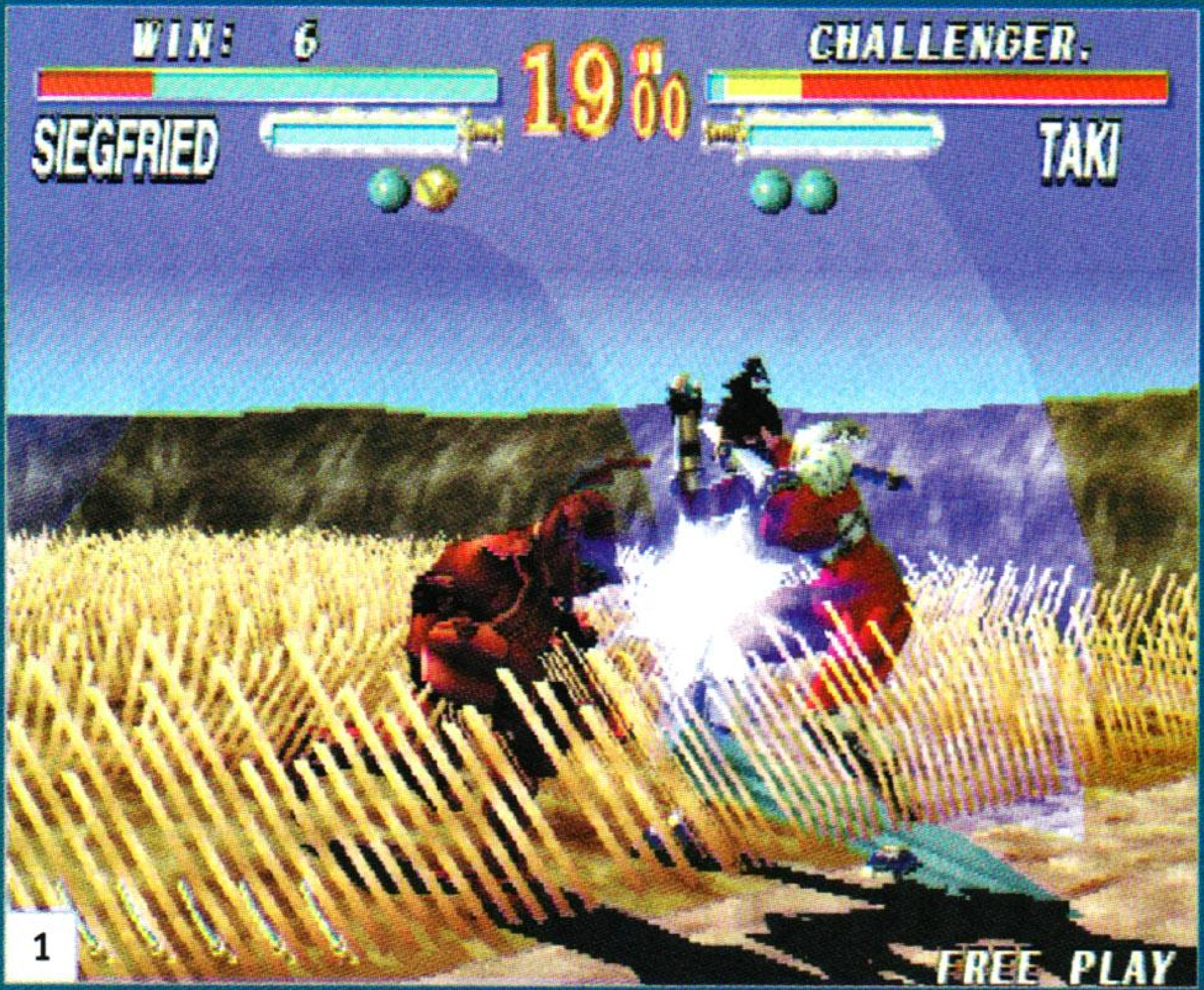

WIN: 17
CHALLENGER.
SIEGFRIED
LOST OF WEAPON
24
TAKI
FREE PLAY


WIN: 13
33
CHALLENGER.
SIEGFRIED
TAKI
FREE PLAY


WIN: 12
17
CHALLENGER.
SIEGFRIED
TAKI
FREE PLAY

Full Name Siegfried Schtauffen
Age 16, born February 6
Height 5'3" (157cm)
Weight 106 pounds
Blood Type A
Family Margaret (mother), Frederick (father, deceased)
Weaponry "Zwei-Hander" sword
Discipline Freestyle
Stage Ostrheinsburg Castle Campaign

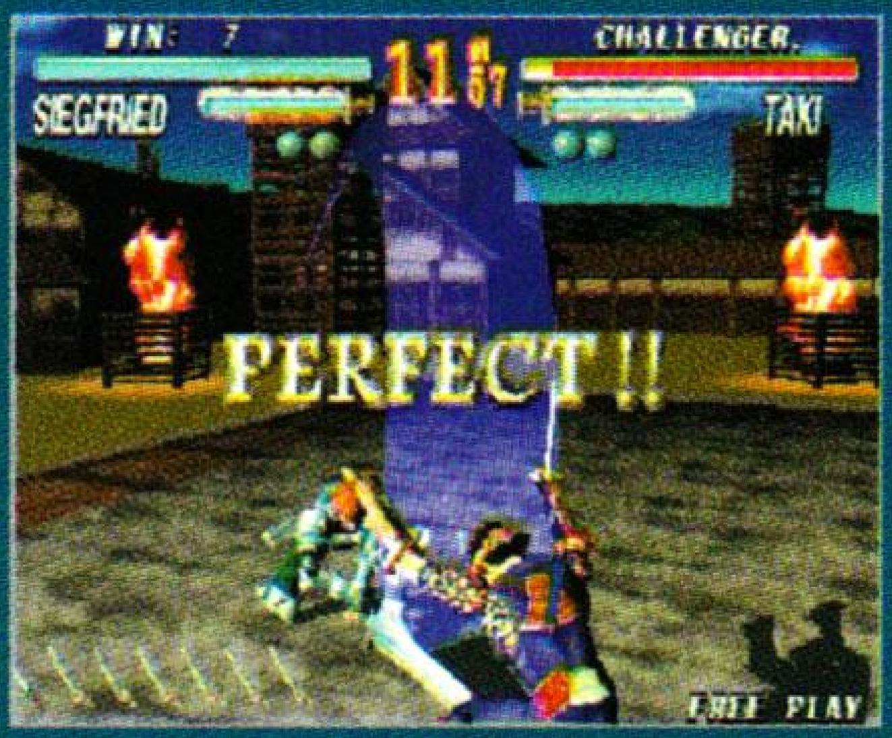
> *"I MUST GET THE SWORD TO AVENGE FATHER'S DEATH... I MUST GET THE SWORD... I MUST..."*

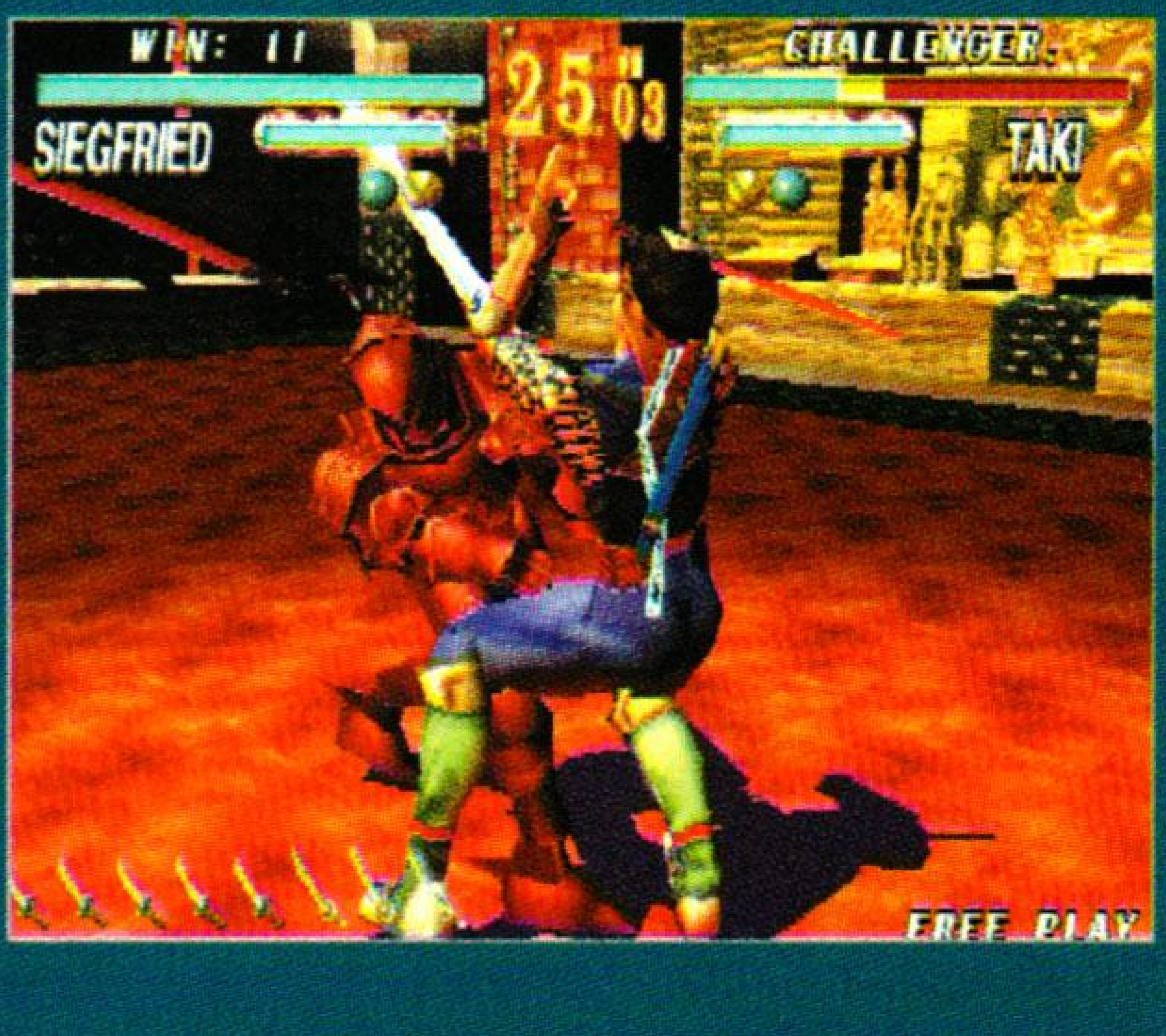

1
WIN: 6
19 00
CHALLENGER.
SIEGFRIED
TAKI
FREE PLAY

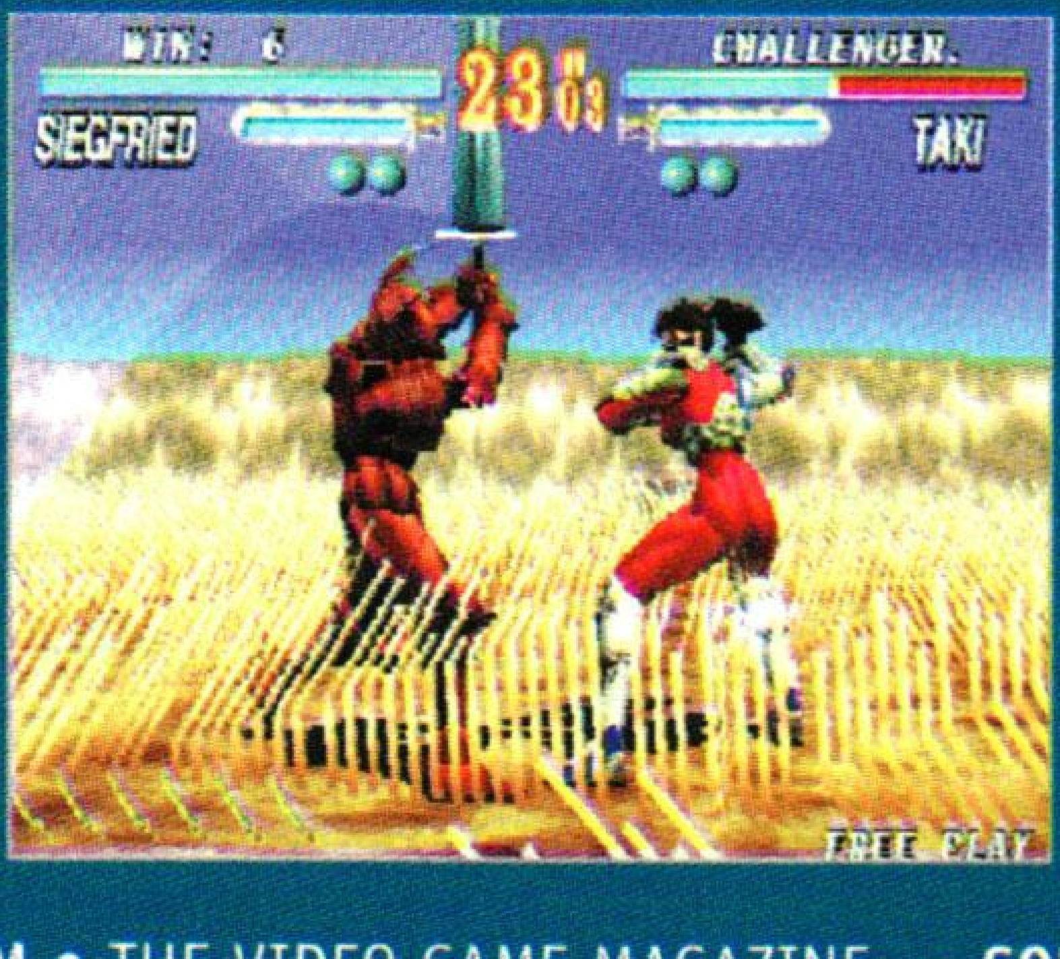
A half-mad youth wanders through the forest, muttering "I will avenge my father's death... I must..." Siegfried is famous as a pirate leader (of the dread Black Wind gang) who is intent on building up his own personal fortune. However, one day a particularly bloody raid ends in tragedy - Siegfried beheads a travelling knight who turns out to be his father! Stricken with remorse, Siegfried cannot believe that he is responsible for his father's death. Convincing himself that "somebody else did it", he aims to get the invincible Soul Edge sword and track down the killer, not realising in his deranged state that he himself is responsible.

Siegfried is a young German fighter who has spent years building up his own type of sword-based art. Although influenced by watching others, his moves are very much his own design. This isn't particularly surprising when you consider his weaponry. Siegfried's "Zwei-Hander" sword (as he calls it) is large, long and extremely heavy. This weapon is probably a bit too much for a boy Siegfried's age to successfully handle, which results in his attacks (although powerful) to take a short while to successfully execute. Thankfully, the sheer size of his sword makes up for his lack of mobility and attacking speed.

A montage of action showing Siegfried in action. A powerful downward swipe finishes off Taki (top) while Siegfried prepares a killer blow (bottom).


WIN: 7
11
CHALLENGER.
SIEGFRIED
TAKI
PERFECT !!
FREE PLAY


WIN: 11
25 03
CHALLENGER.
SIEGFRIED
TAKI
FREE PLAY


WIN: 6
23
CHALLENGER.
SIEGFRIED
TAKI
FREE PLAY

1. Slash Cross

It's moves like this that make Siegfried such a visually dramatic character. As the name suggests, the Slash Cross is a powerful horizontal attack followed up with a vertical swipe. The second part of the attack is difficult to block against since it is mid-level, but the moves don't chain, meaning that a quick fighter can catch Siegfried out between the two attacks.

2. Armour Breaker

A series of high-level swipes to the head characterises the Armour Breaker manoeuvre. All three vertical hits chain together as a combo

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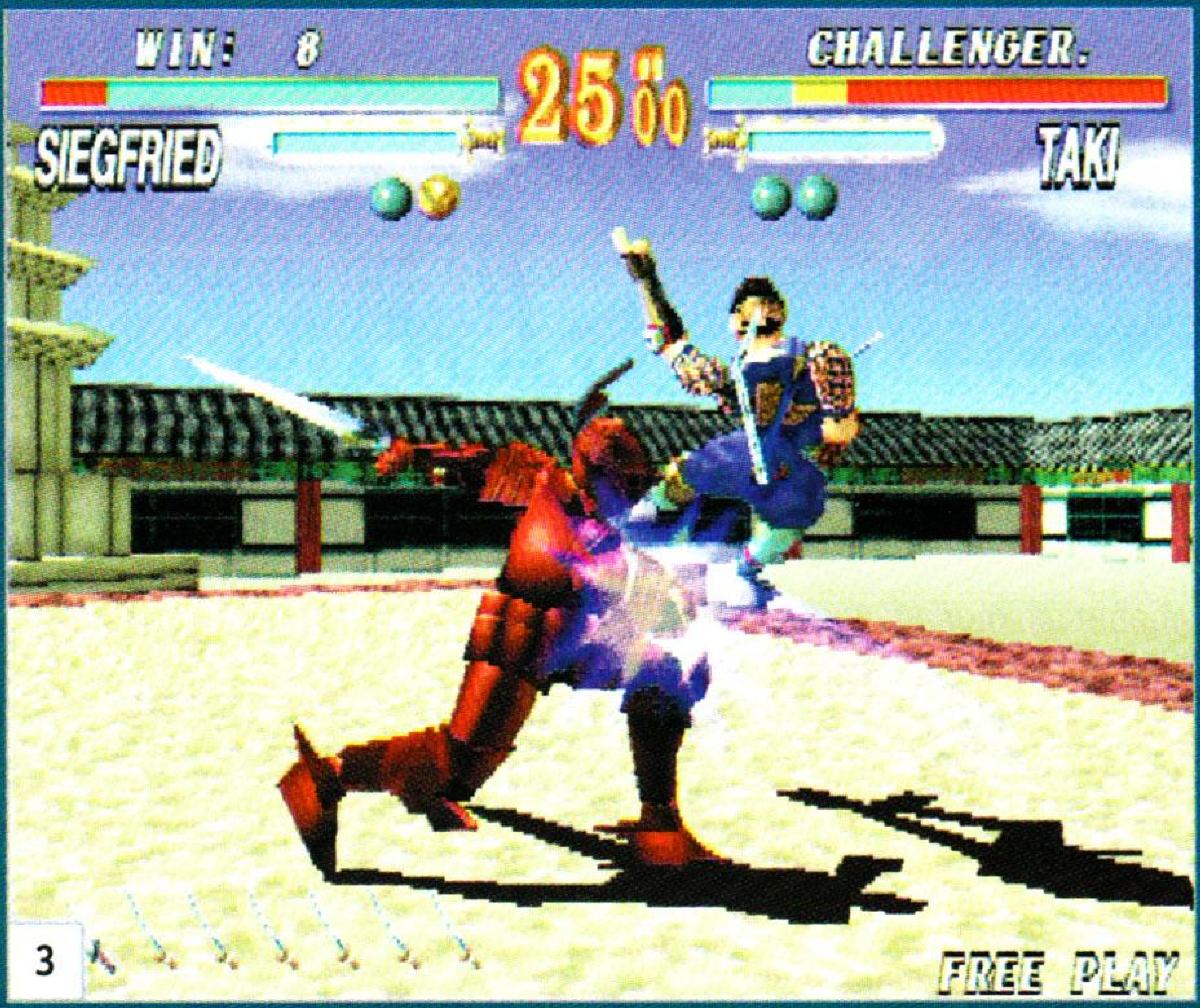
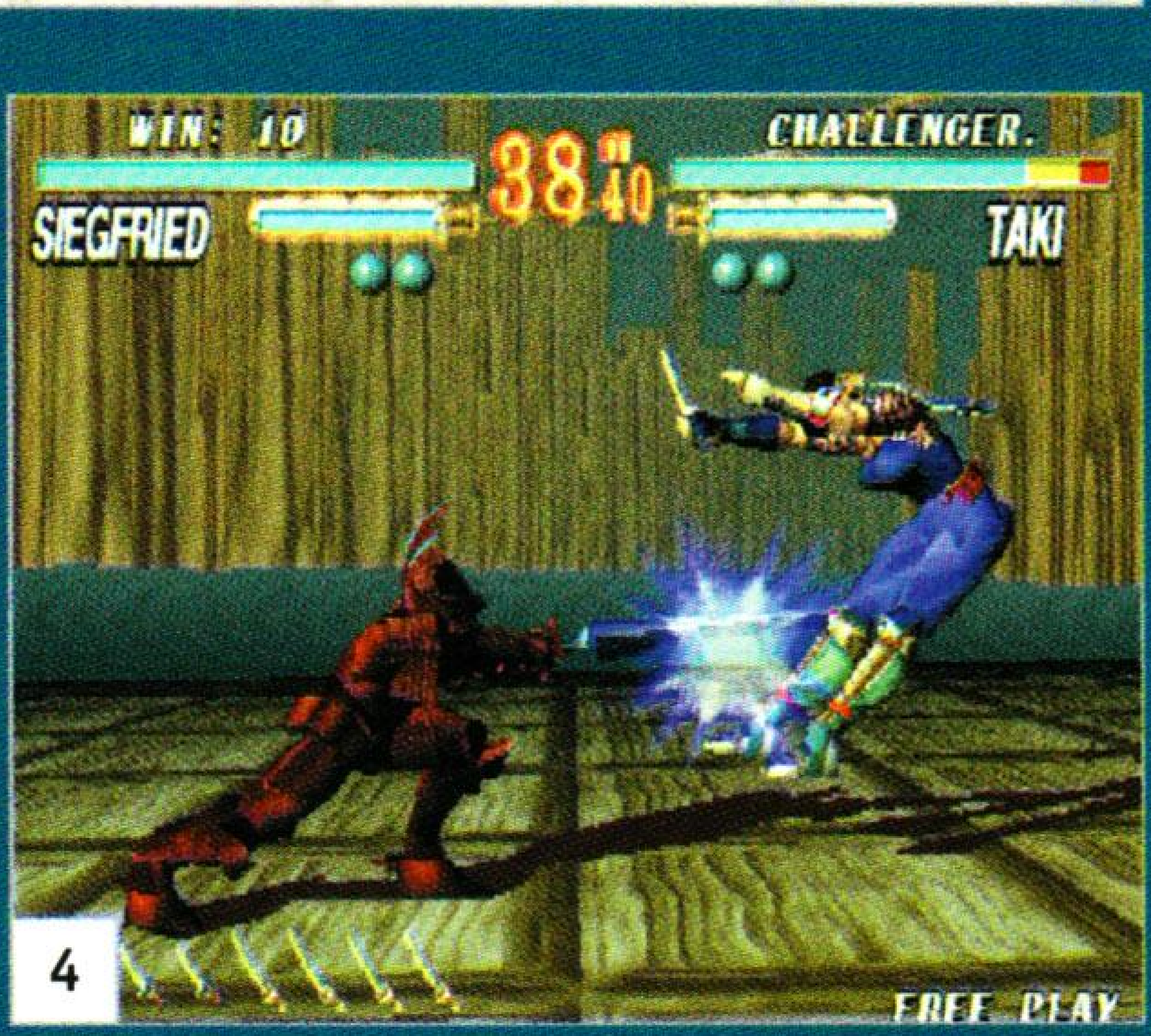
SOUL EDGE

Leader of the 'Schwarzwind', a band of robbers


WIN: 8
CHALLENGER.
25 00
SIEGFRIED
TAKI
FREE PLAY
3


WIN: 10
CHALLENGER.
38 40
SIEGFRIED
TAKI
FREE PLAY
4

(meaning that if the first one hits, you're in trouble). A staple Siegfried attacking combination.

3. Buster Grounder

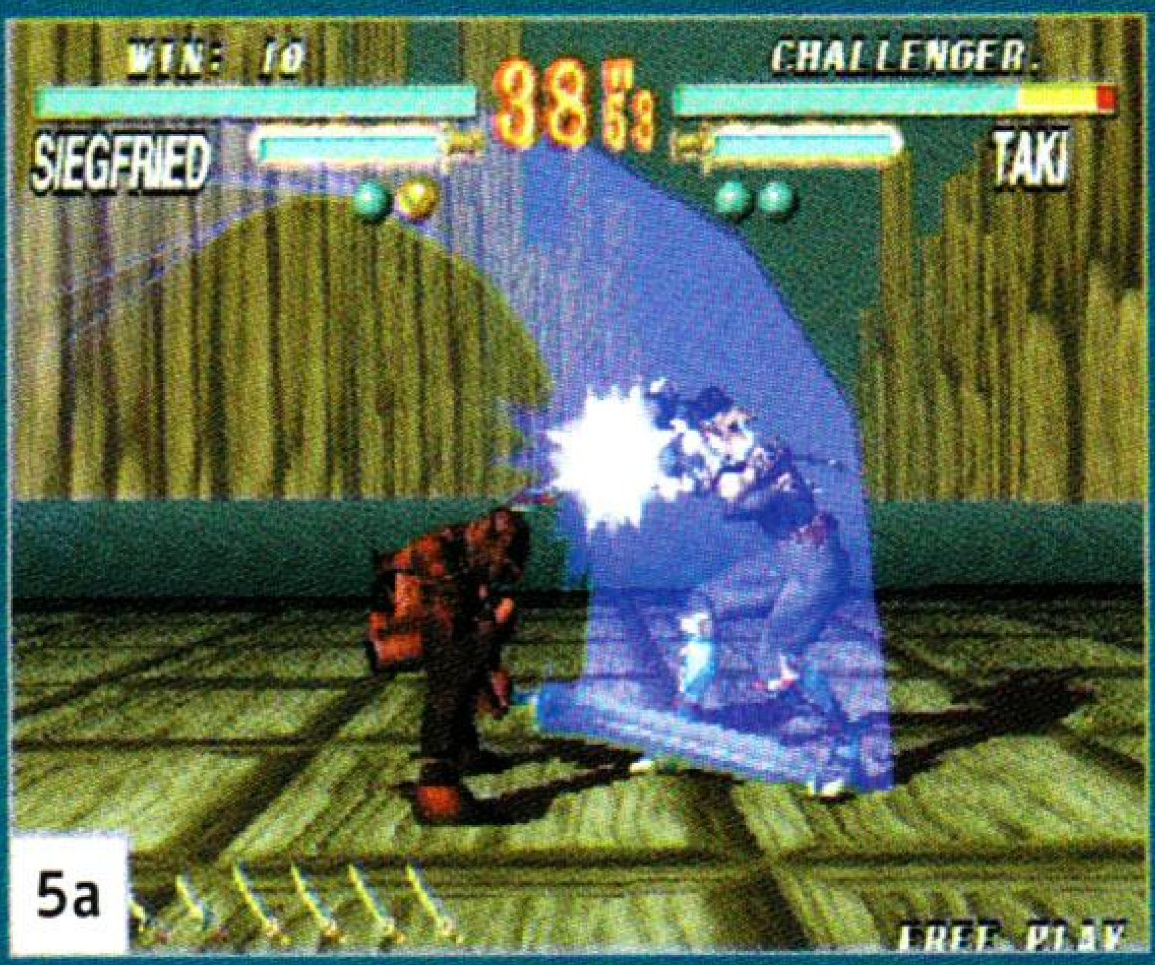
Bearing in mind the lack of mobility and speed associated with Siegfried, it's impressive to see another chaining two-hit combination. This time it takes the form of a vertical cut, followed by another side variant. The attacks move from mid-level to low, and the first strike's resemblance to the first attack in the Armour Breaker make this a good move to fool a human opponent with.

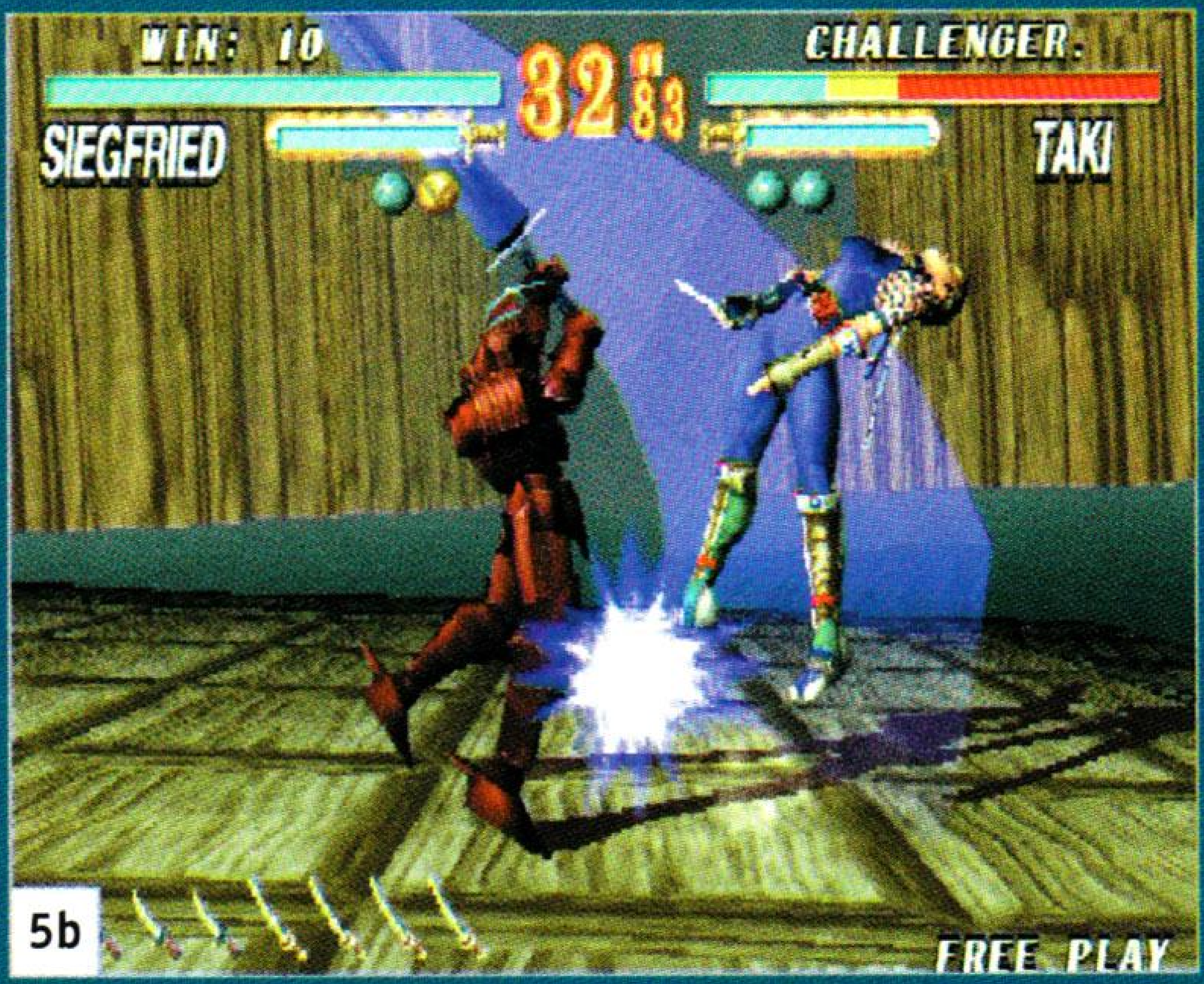
4. V-Swing Strike

A stabbing technique common to those Soul Edge characters with plenty of reach. Summoning his strength, Siegfried draws his sword behind his shoulders before suddenly stabbing forward. Obviously the beginning of this technique takes some time, leaving Siegfried open to attack. Use it with plenty of range to spare, or pay the price.

5. Fatal Drive

Siegfried is a great character to show off what the Soul Edge engine is capable of and this attack is pretty spectacular as a result. Siegfried leaps straight up into the air with a vertical swipe, landing with another. If both hits connect, you can expect to drain around 50% of the opponent's energy bar - this makes the Fatal Drive the nearest thing Soul Edge has to a Tekken Guard Impossible technique.


WIN: 10
CHALLENGER.
38 53
SIEGFRIED
TAKI
FREE PLAY
5a


WIN: 10
CHALLENGER.
32 83
SIEGFRIED
TAKI
FREE PLAY
5b

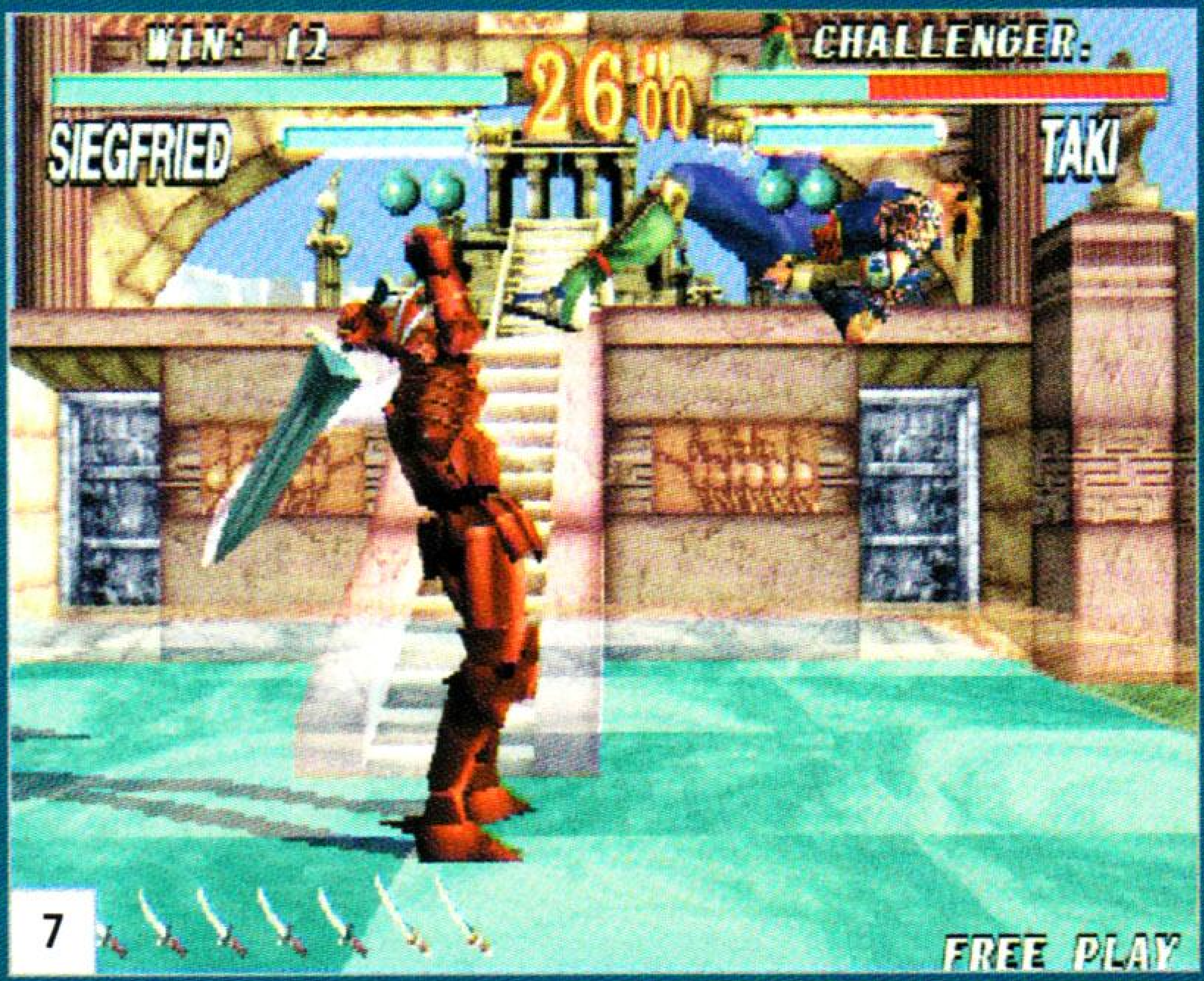
[1]Seek revenge against the 'murderer' who killed his father!

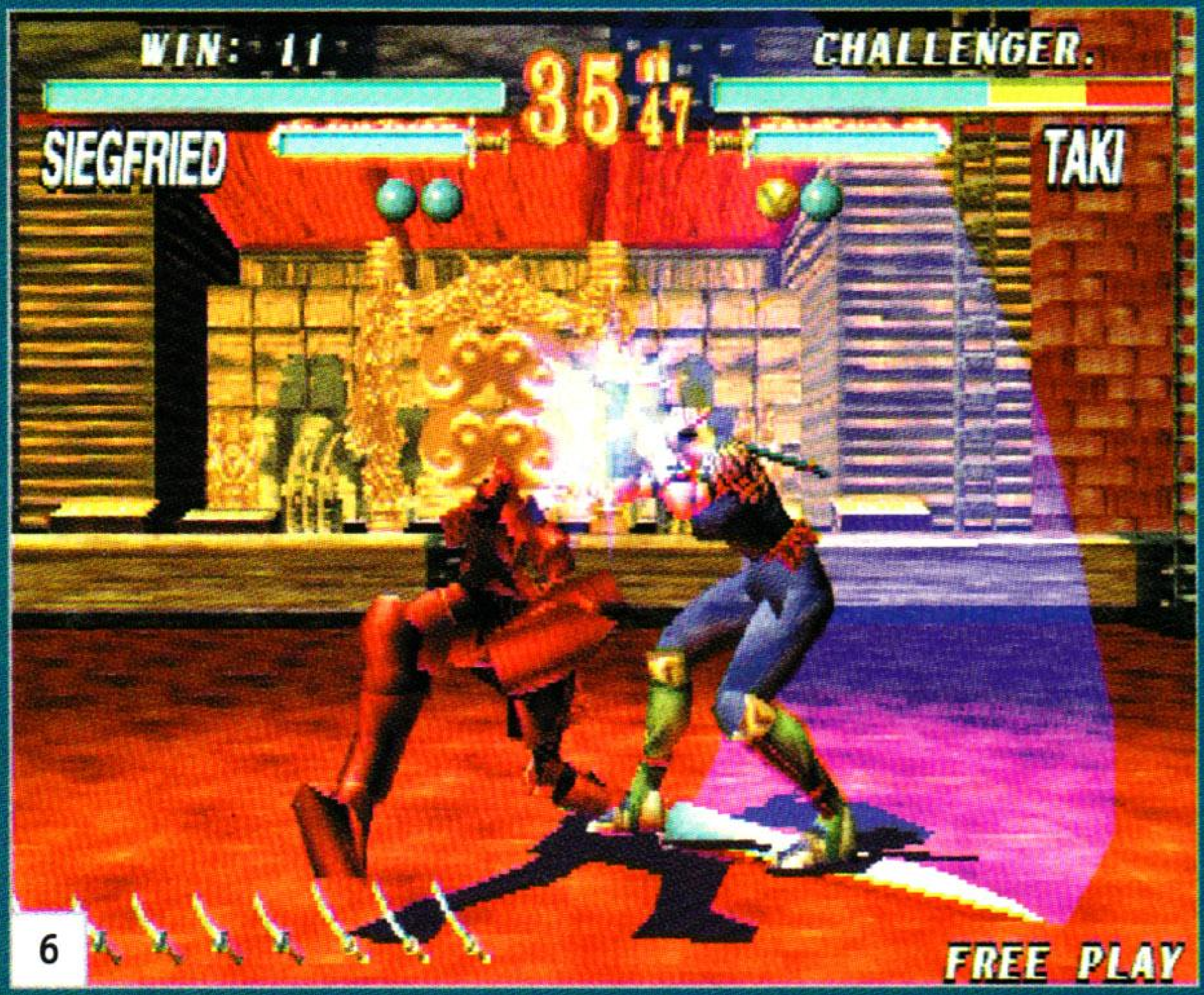
[2]Exchange 'Faust', his trusty Zweihander for the invincible legend sword 'Soul Edge'!

[3]Return to lead the 'Black Wind' to victory over southwest Germany!

6. Flying Edge

Another pretty spectacular move from Siegfried is the Flying Edge. Spinning his "Zwei-Hander" around with one hand, the sword inflicts a myriad of cuts on the opponent, during which time Siegfried also administers plenty of kicks on his hapless foe.


WIN: 12
CHALLENGER.
26 00
SIEGFRIED
TAKI
FREE PLAY
7

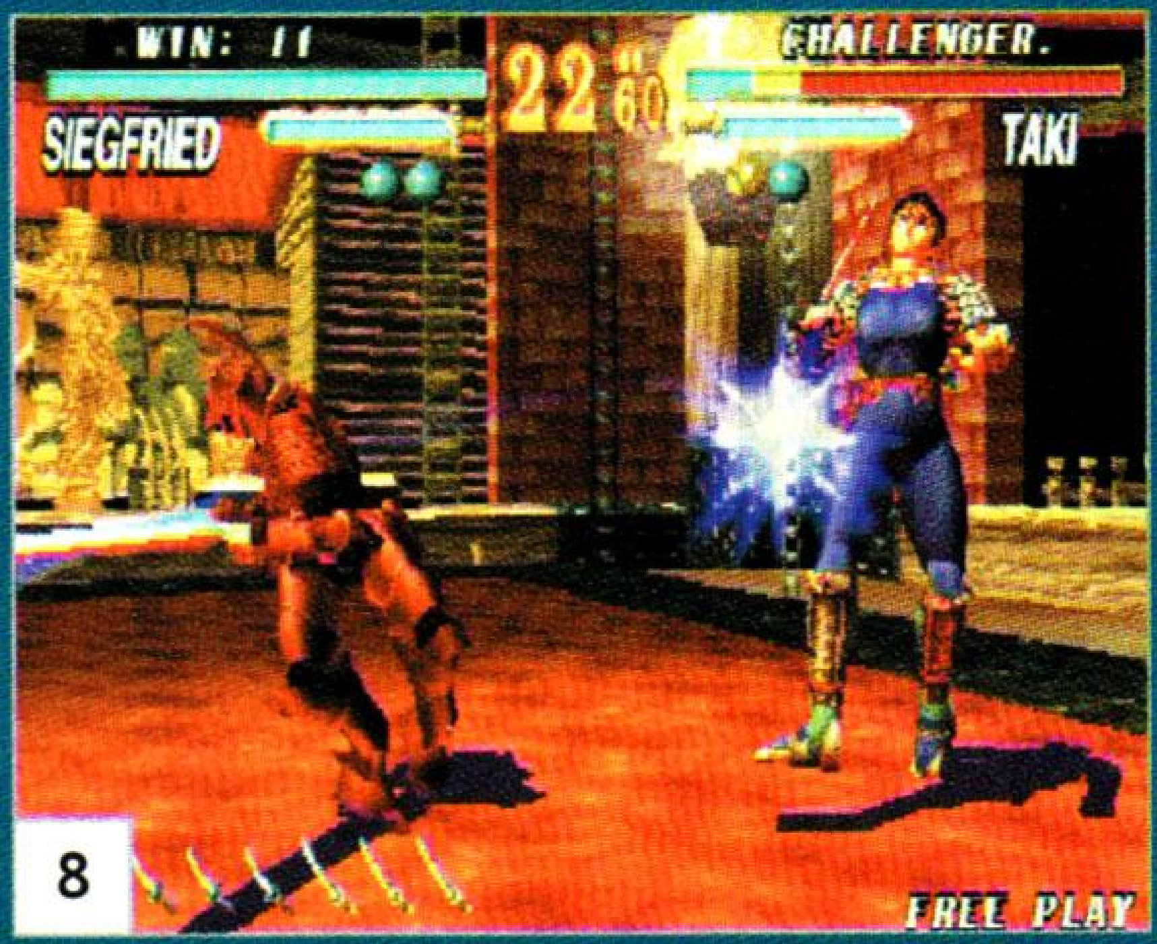

WIN: 11
CHALLENGER.
35 47
SIEGFRIED
TAKI
FREE PLAY
6

7. Up Toss

Considering the amount of realism that Namco have injected into Soul Edge, it's quite a surprise to see an attack that seems as implausible as this one! The Up Toss is a move whereby Siegfried uses his sword to throw his opponent up into the air, Kage-Maru style. A possible range of follow-ups seem likely as Siegfried's victim falls back down to terra firma.

8. Spin Cutter

By pressing forward and A, Siegfried holds his sword horizontally close to his chest and performs a sudden violent spin, which literally shreds the opposition! Again, this move really shows off the speed blur system employed in Soul Edge. In terms of effectiveness, the Spin Cutter is not particularly powerful, but it is one of Siegfried's faster moves, which makes it a useful technique to know.


WIN: 11
CHALLENGER.
22 60
SIEGFRIED
TAKI
FREE PLAY
8

SOPHITIA

EMOTIONAL GODDESS! MAIDEN WHO FIGHTS FOR THE GODS!

WIN: 5
CHALLENGER.
SOPHITIA
ROCK
FREE PLAY

SOPHITIA
ROCK
FREE PLAY

WIN: 6
CHALLENGER.
33
SOPHITIA
ROCK
FREE PLAY

Full Name	Sophitia Alexandra
Age	18, born March 12
Height	5'7" (168cm)
Weight	Secret
Blood Type	B
Family	Achelous (father), Nike (mother), Cassandra (younger sister), Lucius (younger brother)
Weaponry	Omega Sword, Owl-Shield
Discipline	Player one: Saint Athena school. Player two: Rapid Ares school
Stage	'Eurydice Shrine', the sanctuary of Hephaestus

"I WILL SEEK OUT THE SOUL EDGE AND DESTROY ITS EVIL POWER!"

Although physically average compared to her fighting opponents, Sophitia is charged with a power that rivals her foes' - her belief in the Grecian gods. One day the gods respond to her prayers and charge her with the mission of finding the Soul Edge, whose power could easily corrupt and destroy the world were it to fall into the wrong hands. For Sophitia to be given such a quest surprised here - after all, she was just merely a baker's daughter - nothing more. "Good arms are the only thing you need to save the world" replied her god-like benefactor, who kitted her out with a magical short sword and shield.

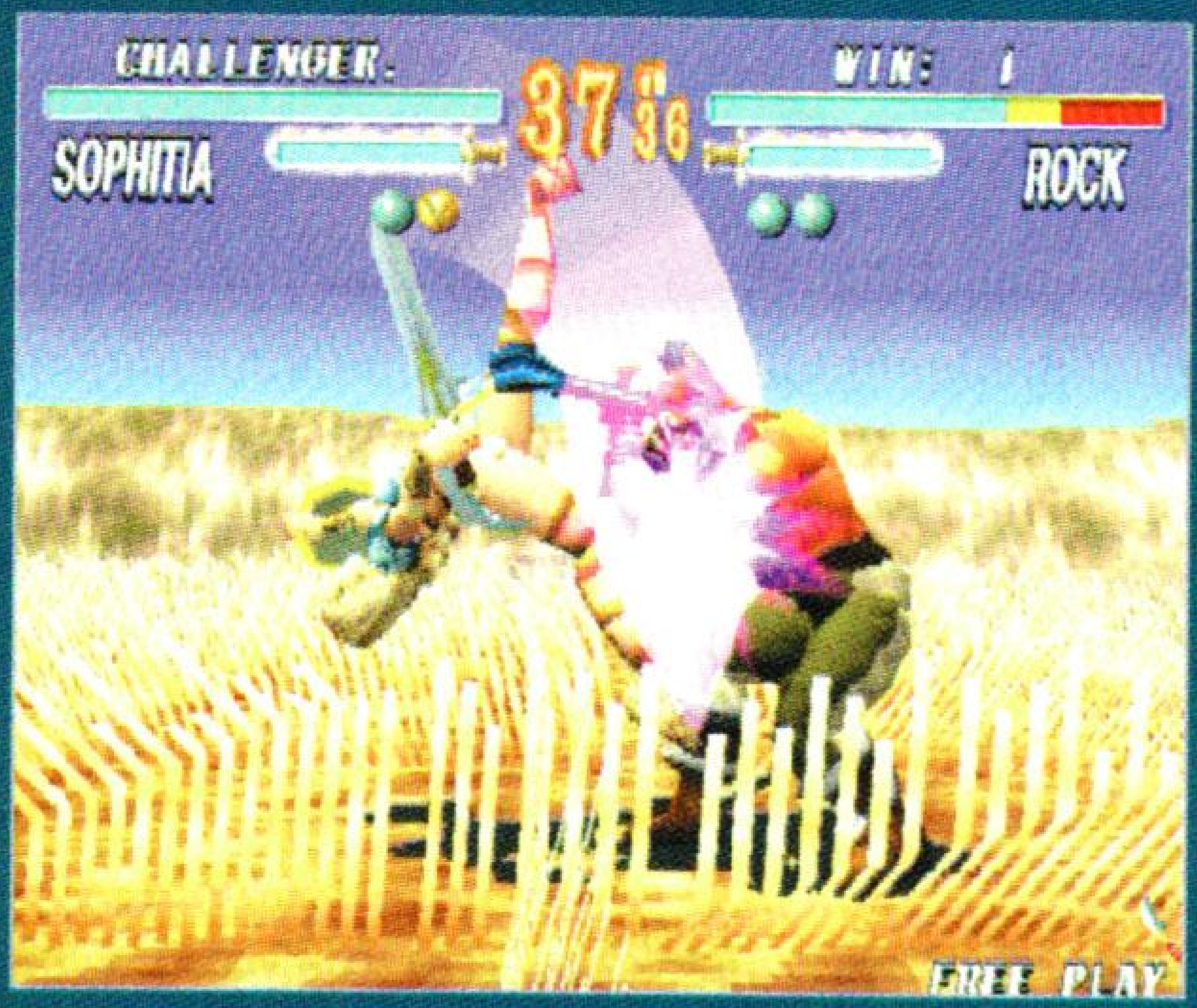
Sophitia is one of the most distinctive characters in Soul Edge, whose very appearance evokes the spirit of Ancient Greece. That's not particularly suprising, as Sophitia comes from an established Grecian family of distinguished fighters. In fact, her fighting prowess and weapons are a gift from the gods, who have sent her into battle for reasons of their own. Sophitia is a reasonably fast character made distinctive by the fact that she is the only fighter to carry a shield. This means that her weapon energy bar refers to the shield exclusively (so she only loses that and keeps the sword when the bar reaches nothing). Although nothing has been discovered yet, it's possible that the shield has its own special move-reversal possibilities.

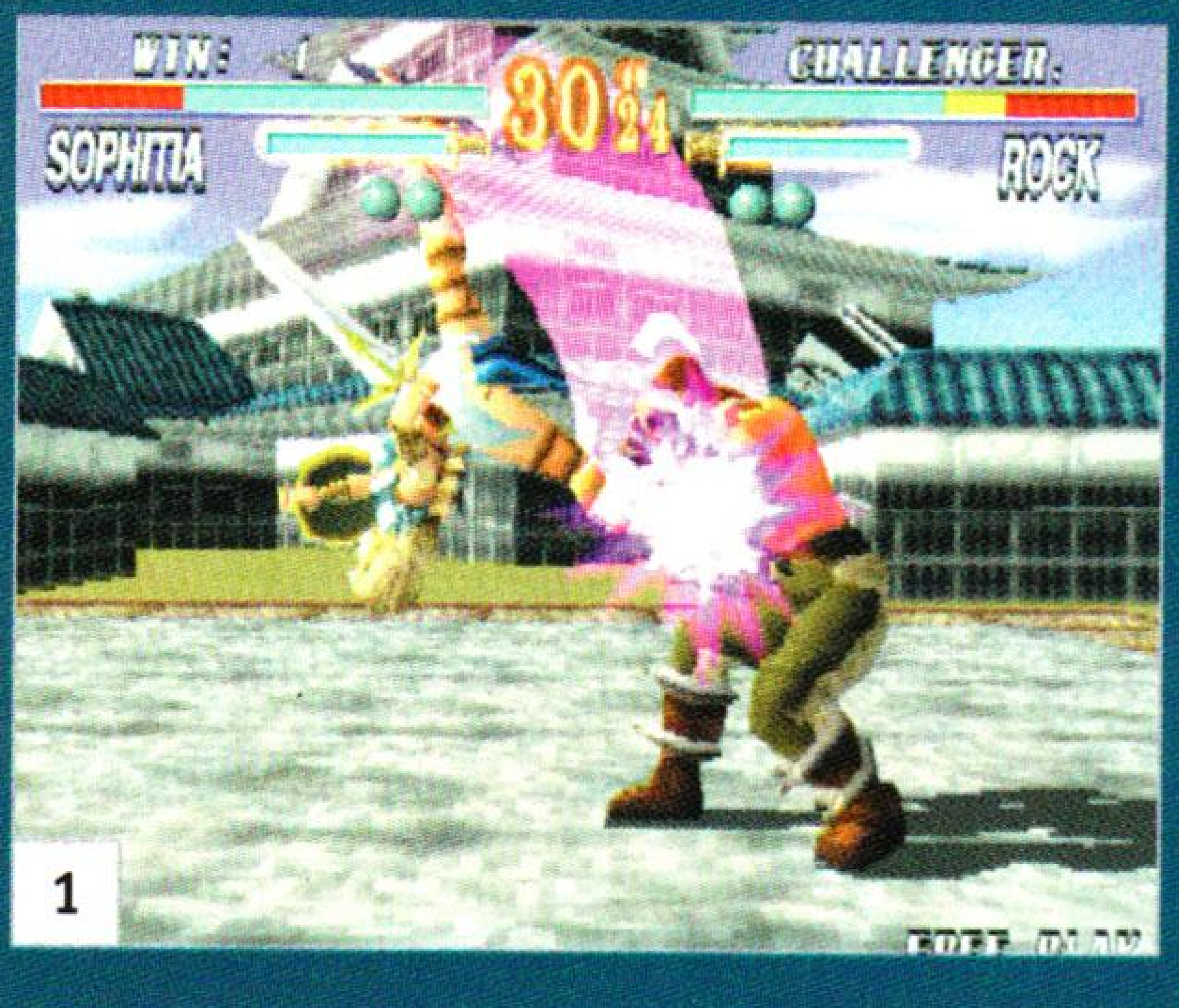
1. SLIDE ANGEL KICK

This elegant attack is indicative of Sophitia's distinctive attacking style. She follows up two horizontal swipes with a low turning heel, which actually hits on a mid-body level. Not only do all three attacks chain into a combination, but the heel is unguardable to crouching, blocking characters.

2. SLIDE UNDER KICK

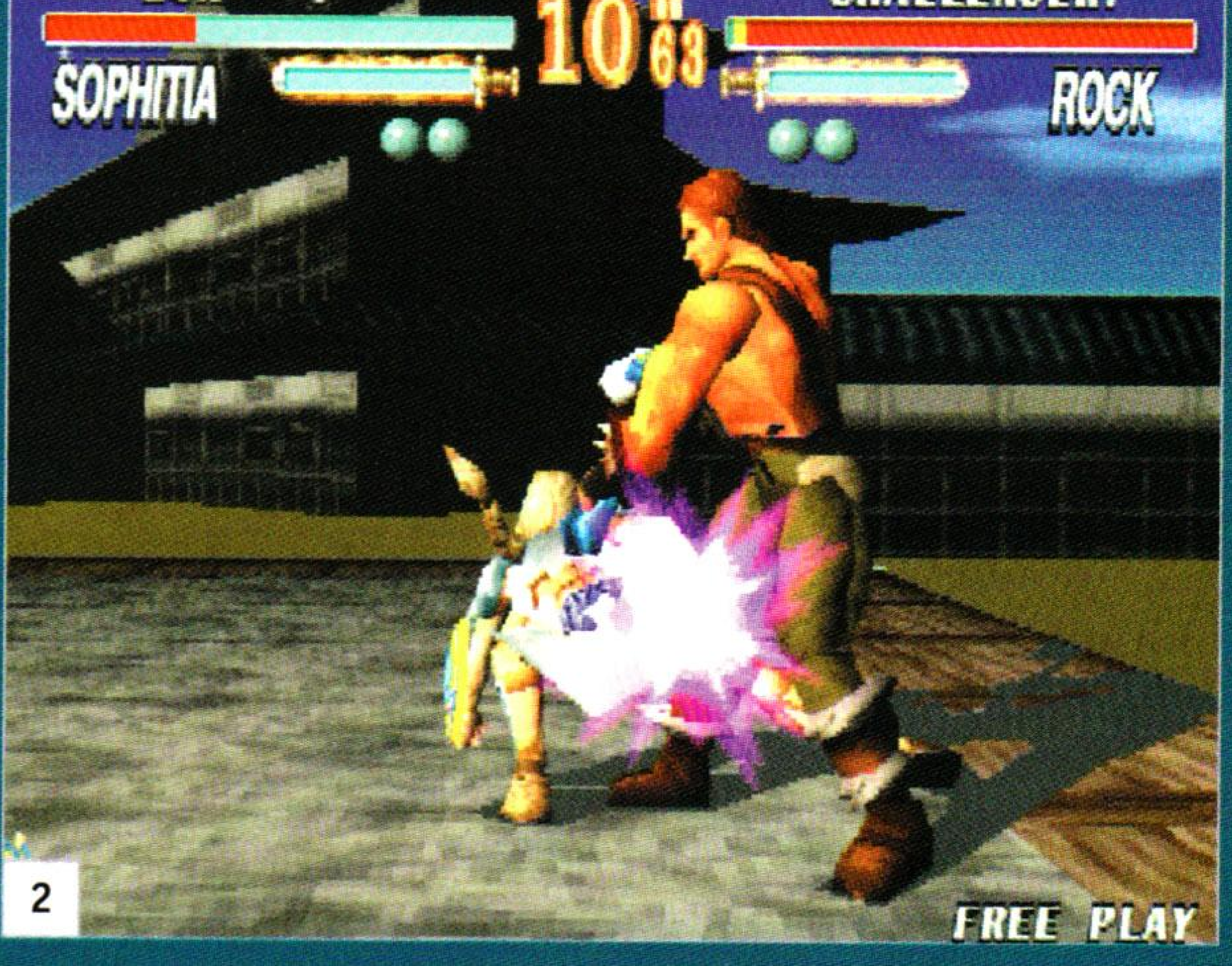
This is a cunning variant of the Slide Angel Kick. Again, it starts with two horizontal slashes, but this time finishes off with an upper foot-sweep. Unlike the Slide Angel Kick, the opponent needs to be crouch-guarding to evade this attack. Using both attacks can seriously confuse the opponent.





1

Rock is heading towards the floor after a successful strike with the Slide Angel Kick. Practically unblockable should the first two sword swipes hit the target.



2

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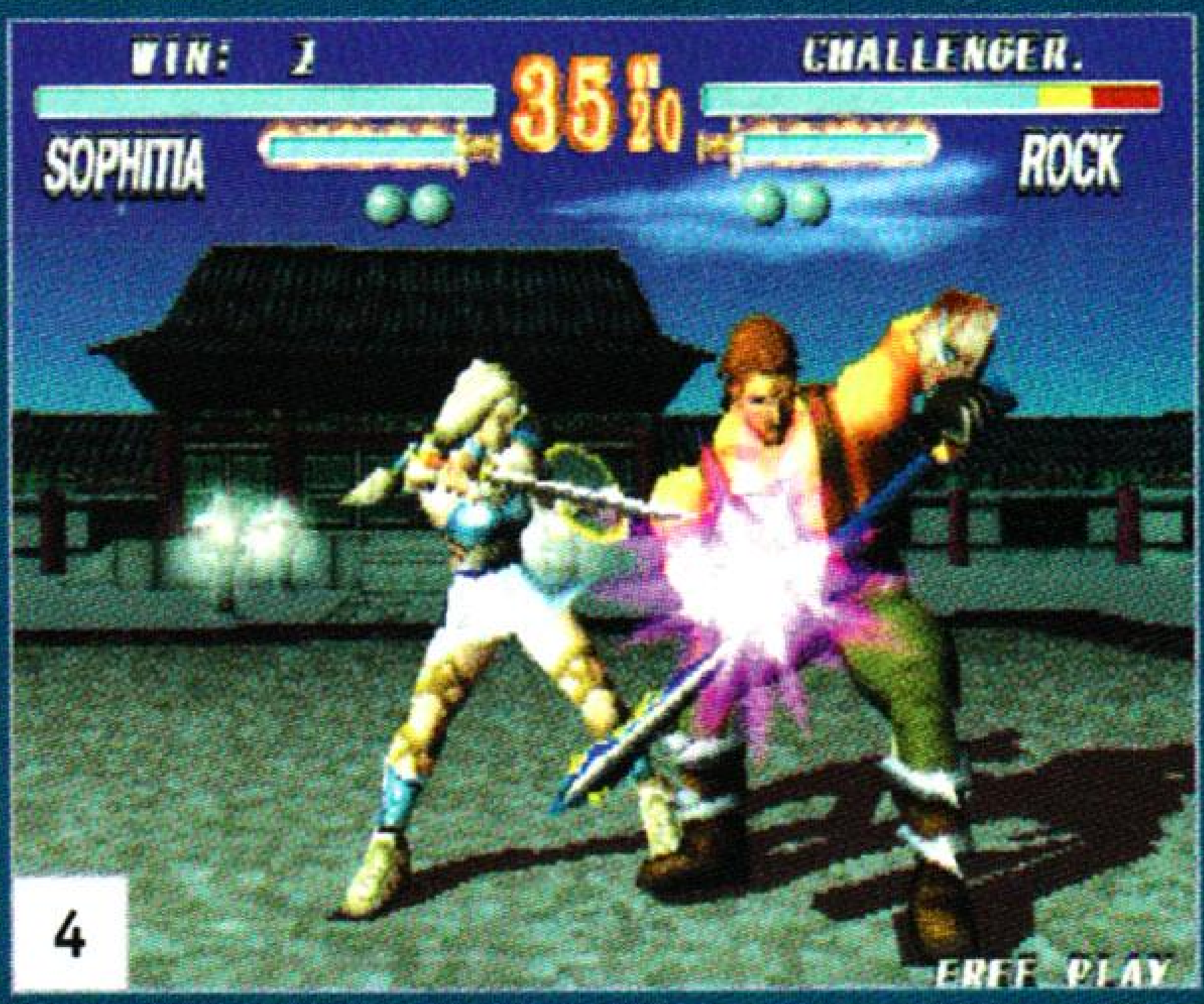
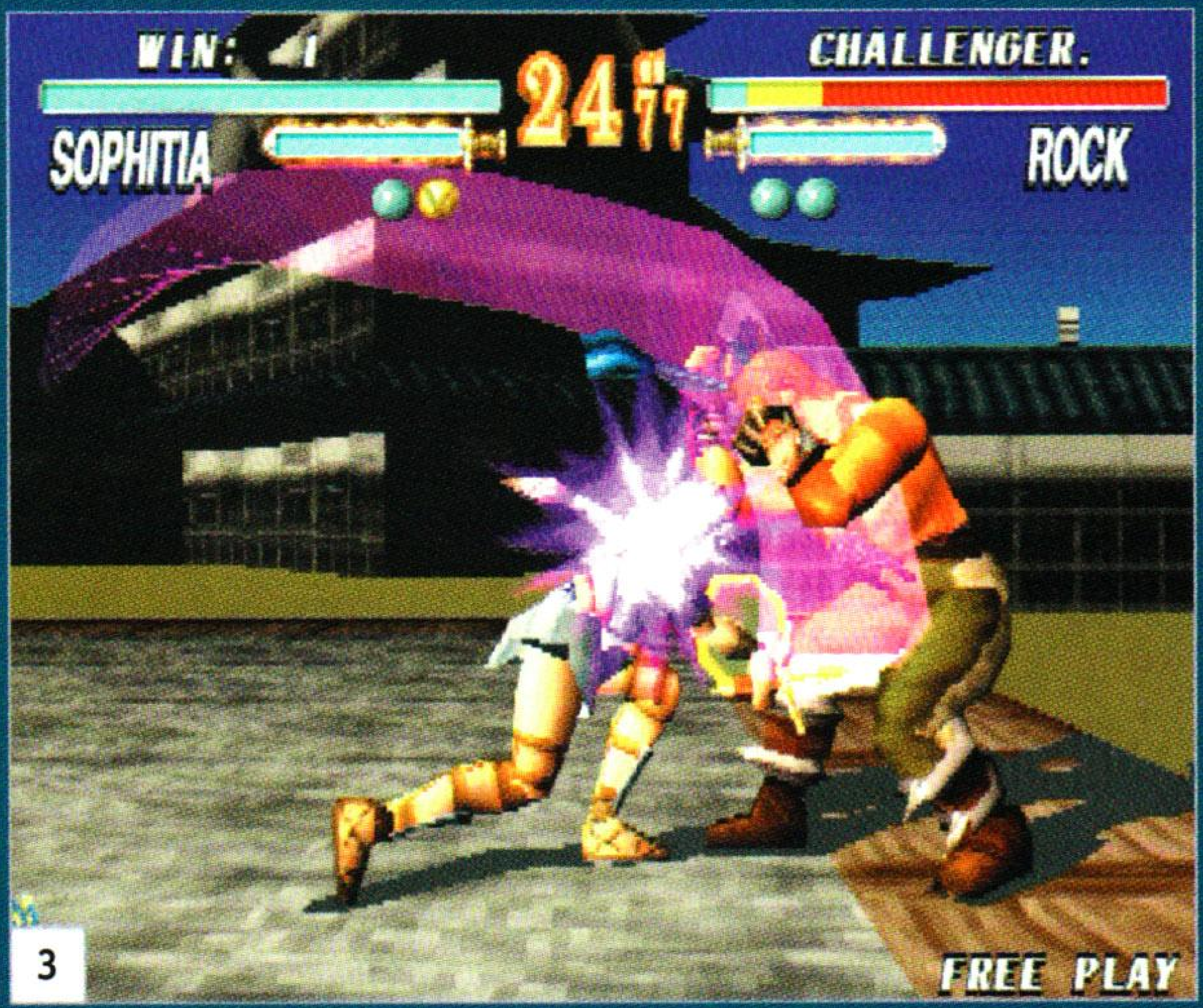
GRECIAN SWORD-FIGHTER ON THE MOST DIVINE QUEST


WIN: 2
35
CHALLENGER.
SOPHITIA
ROCK
FREE PLAY

4


WIN: 1
24
CHALLENGER.
SOPHITIA
ROCK
FREE PLAY

3

3. STARDUST SPLASH

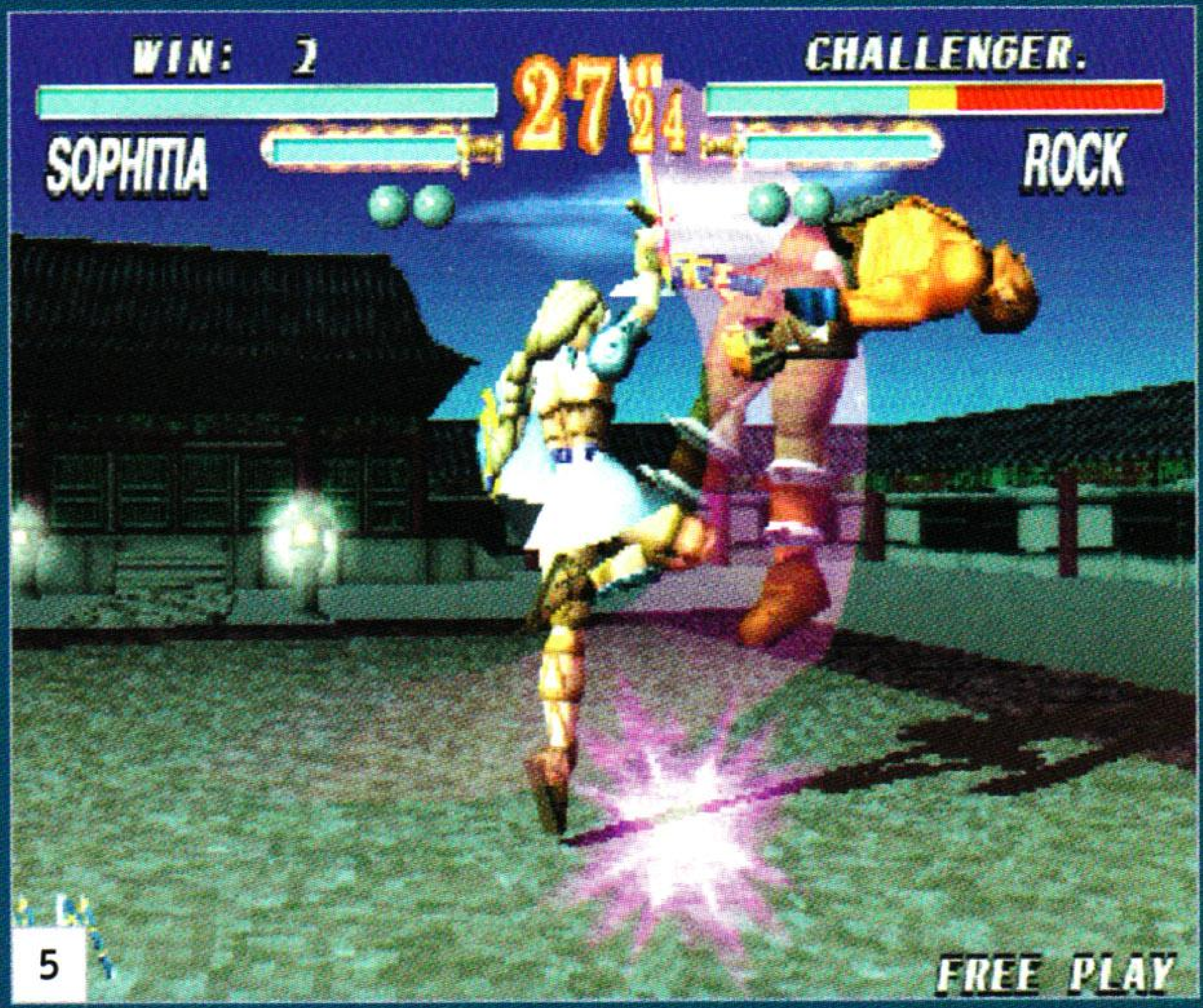
This move looks pretty special and very difficult to execute, but in fact, the entire procedure is activated with just the B button! The attack takes the form of a big swipe upwards, followed by three powerful slashes. An easy combination to master that hits entirely on the mid-level of the opponent. A good technique to use after repelling a strong blow from your opponent as this attack is very quick to activate.

4. RIVER'S MIRAGE

A useful technique for Sophitia is this River's Mirage manoeuvre. A big swipe is followed up immediately with a side-slash (the only technique she has like this that hits on the mid-body level). A useful move to have in your repertoire. This attack has a favourable reach and should be used with the Angel Strike to attack foes at a distance.

5. UPPER HEAVEN

Although this move takes the form of a massive uppercut, it actually connects on a mid-level, which can be used to fool the opponent. This might sound ideal, but the Stardust Splash is favourable and more often effective.


WIN: 2
27
CHALLENGER.
SOPHITIA
ROCK
FREE PLAY

5

6. ANGEL KICK

For Sophitia experts, it's clear that this attack has been seen before in the Slide Angel Kick combination. It's identical to the aforementioned technique, only without the sword-work.

SOPHITIA
ROCK
SOPHITIA WINS

7. TORNADO LOW KICK

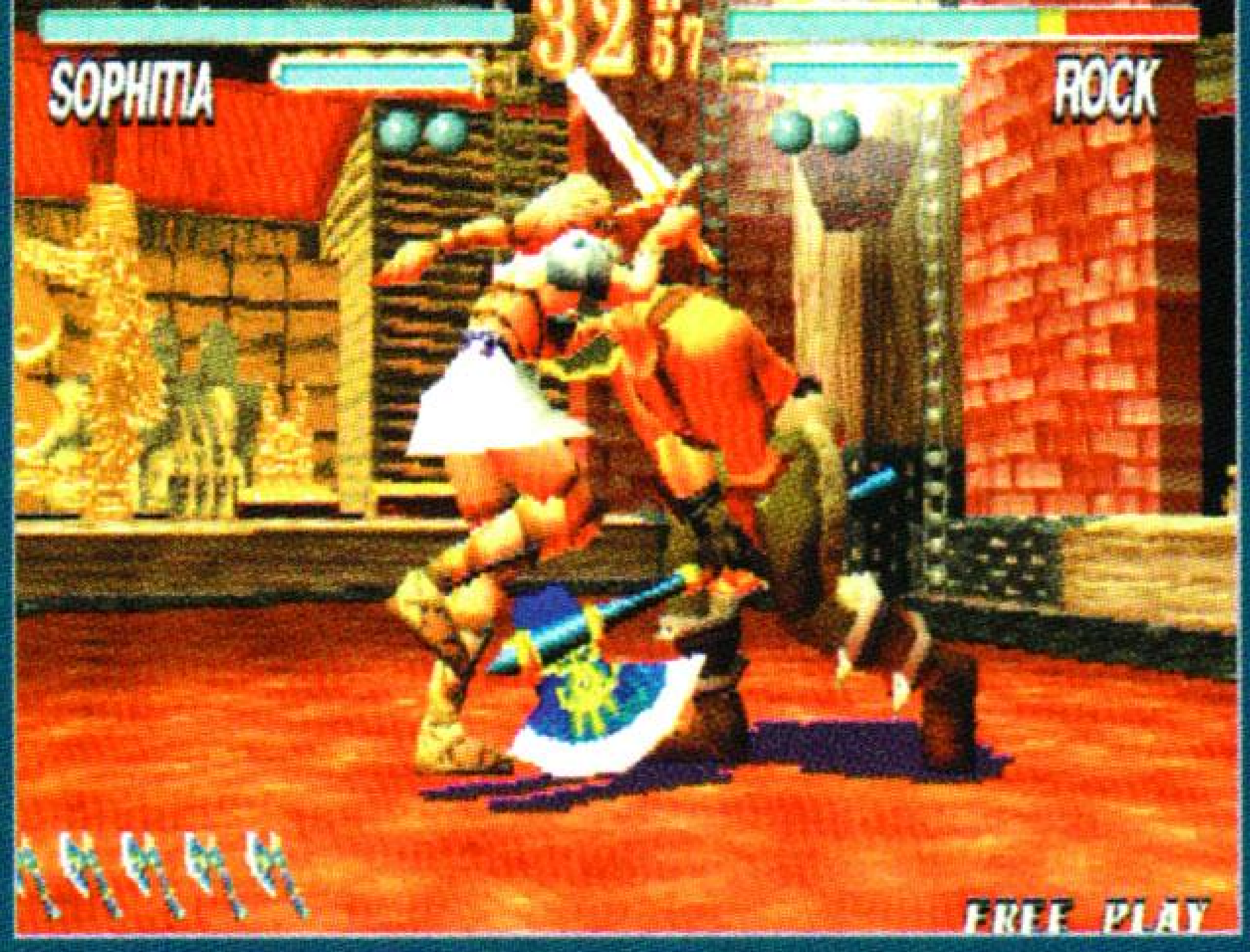
Ironically, one of Sophitia's most powerful techniques involves no use of the sword or shield whatsoever. Twisting in the air, Sophitia lands a low-level kick on her foe. This is a pretty slow move to execute, but the advantages of switching from a standing position to an immediate low-level attack should be obvious. As almost all of Sophitia's attacks hit at mid-level this attack stands a high chance of catching your opponent completely off-guard if used sparingly.

8. ANGEL STRIKE

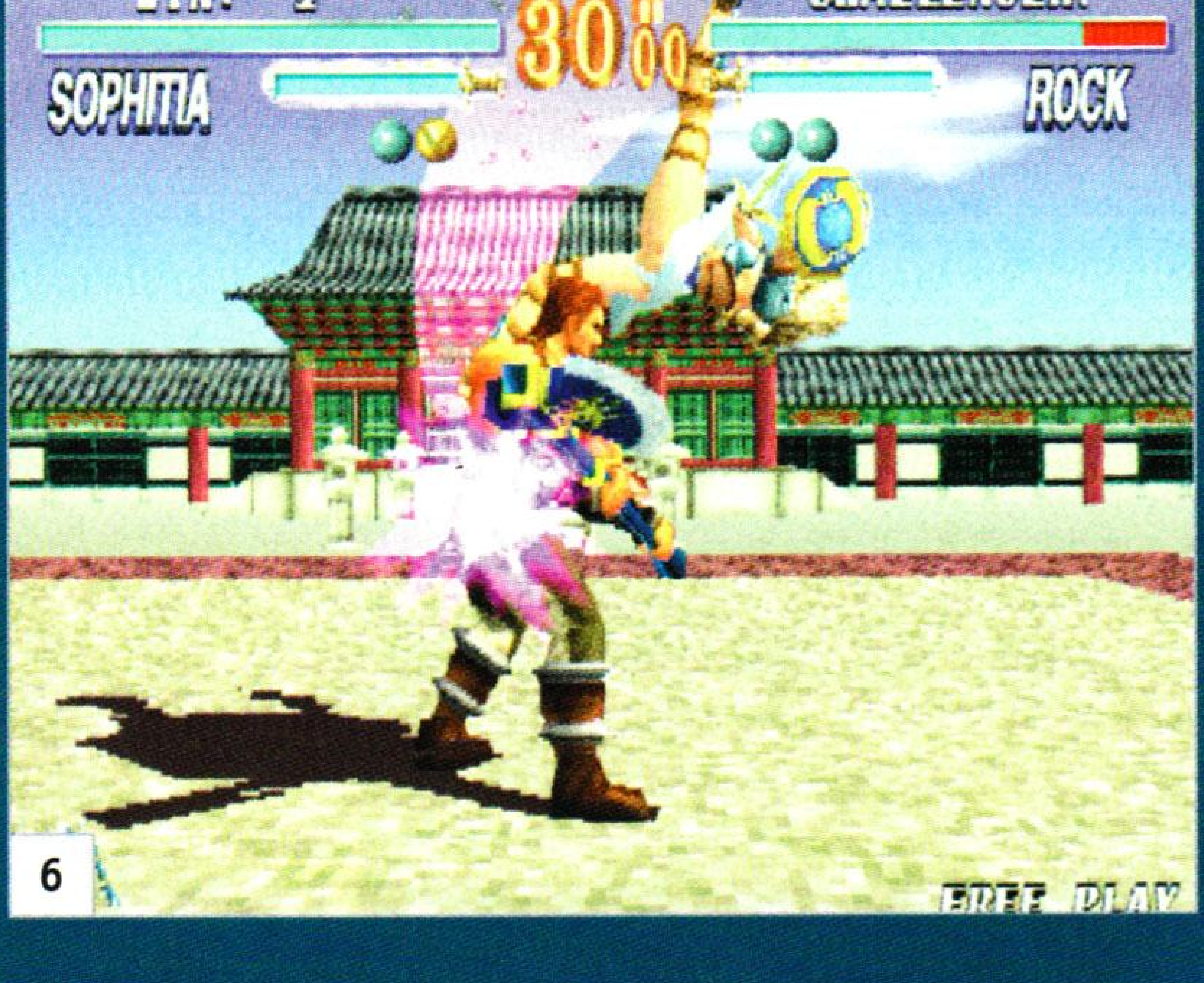
A very basic-sounding attack which shouldn't be underplayed by potential Sophitia players. This move sees the Grecian fighting wonder lunge forward with a long-reaching stabbing motion. If at hits at its intended mid-level target, the opponent is decked. This leaves them open to a follow-up attack whilst they are prone. Like the River's Mirage this is a good choice for a distance attack as the reach is quite long.

[1]CHOSEN BY THE GODS OF OLYMPUS TO DESTROY THE EVIL KNOWN AS SOUL EDGE!

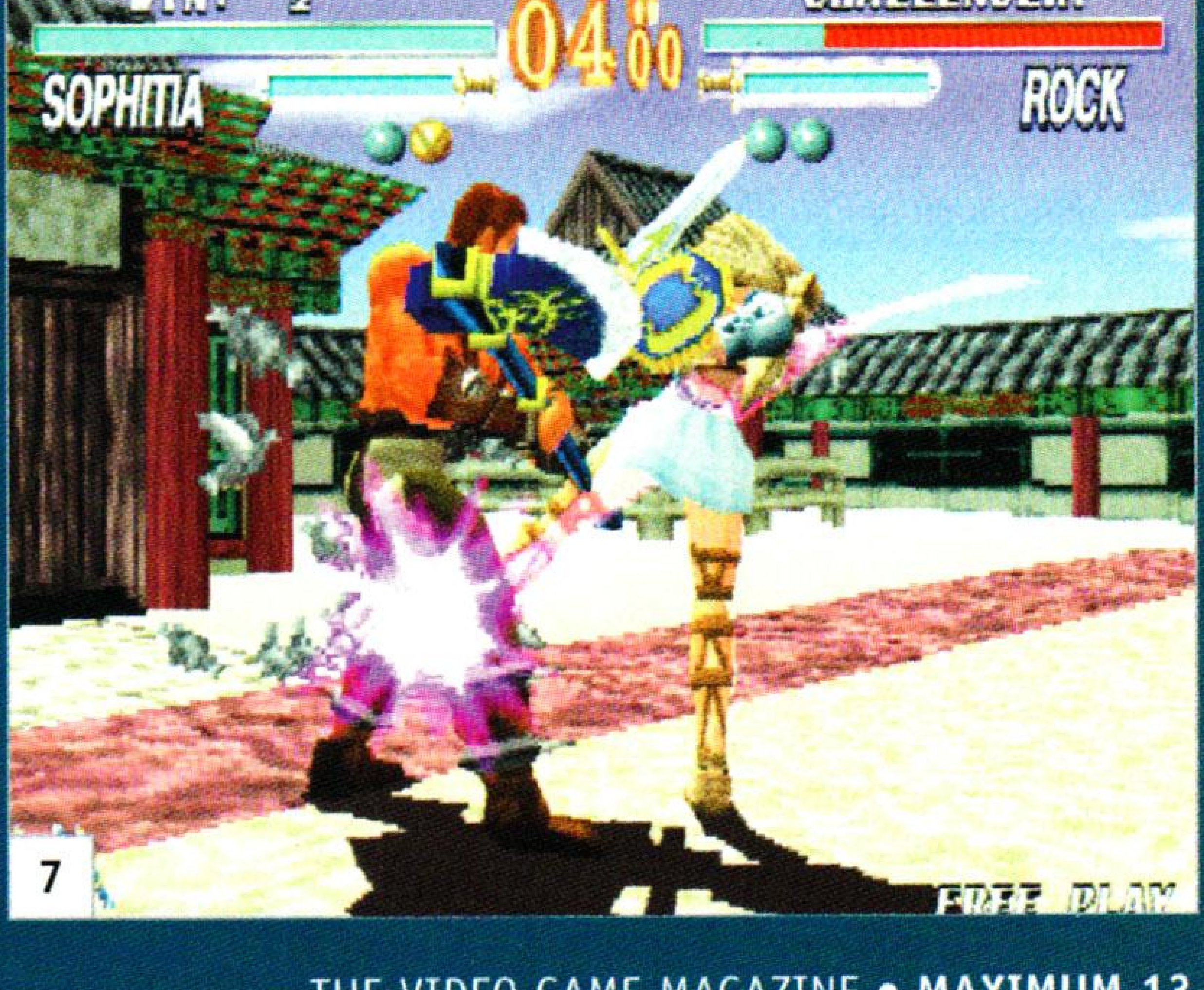
[2]PROTECTED BY THE GODDESS OF VICTORY AND EQUIPPED WITH DIVINE WEAPONS!


WIN: 5
32
CHALLENGER.
SOPHITIA
ROCK
FREE PLAY

Press A and G together when near your opponent and watch with amusement as the plucky lass introduces her knee to the guy's knackers yard.


WIN: 2
30
CHALLENGER.
SOPHITIA
ROCK
FREE PLAY

6


WIN: 2
04
CHALLENGER.
SOPHITIA
ROCK
FREE PLAY

7

LI LONG

THE RAGE OF THE EXECUTIONER

WIN: 18
CHALLENGER.
LI LONG
VOLDO
32
FREE PLAY

WIN: 18
CHALLENGER.
LI LONG
VOLDO
27
FREE PLAY

STAGE 9 10'06"60
30
LI LONG
CERVANTES
FREE PLAY

Full Name Li Long
Age 24, born October 23
Height 5'7" (168cm)
Weight 55kg
Blood Type B
Family Mei Mei (younger sister)
Weaponry Hand-made nunchaka with mounted blades
Discipline Matchless Dragon
Stage Upper Chang Jiang river in China

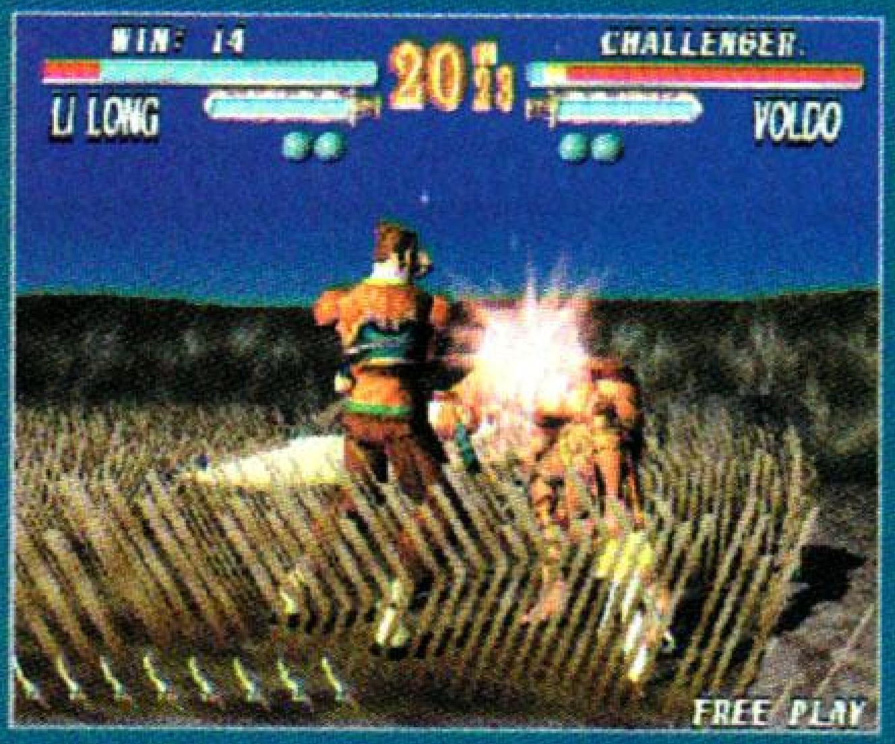
"I WILL HUNT DOWN AND DESTROY EVERY SWORDSMEN IN JAPAN!"

A SECRET assassin despatched by the Emperor to track down the Soul Edge sword, Li Long is one of the most feared fighters in the country having slain many "Wokou" - pirates who operated in the East and South China Seas. However, as his bloodlust grew he expanded his death-dealing operations to encompass barons and lords - any wrong-doers in fact. When close family friends are murdered by a wandering fencer, Li goes on a mission to track down all the country's sword-slingers, including Mitsurugi, and despatch them all. Learning that Mitsurugi is searching for the Soul Edge, Li Long remembers his original mission and decides to take it up more seriously this time, hoping to meet Mitsurugi en route...

One of the most dramatic characters in the game, Li Long, appears to have been very much influenced by the nunchuka-slinging antics of a certain Bruce Lee (although all of those particular scenes were banned in the UK). Li Long uses nunchuka to devastating effect, and it's on this particular character that you can see the sheer amount of work that must have gone into the motion capture as he effortlessly swings them between hands. Nunchuka are deadly enough (to warrant a ban in the UK), but Li Long has gone one stage further and has added razor-sharp mini-sword blades to the ends, making them even deadlier to his opponents. A character who does well in a beginner's hands, but grows ever more deadly as the player gains proficiency with his fighting arts.

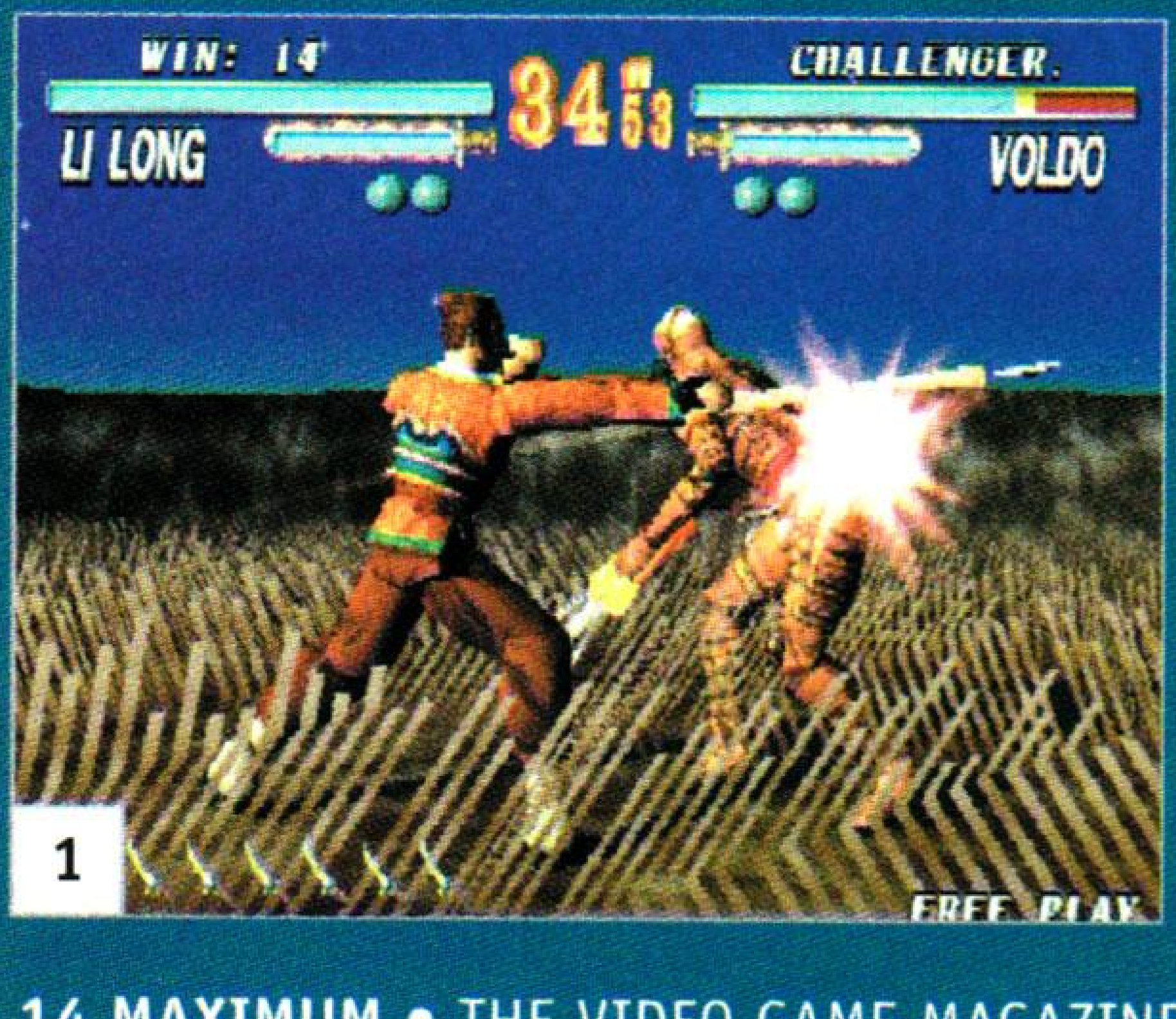
WIN: 15
CHALLENGER.
LI LONG
VOLDO
00
LI LONG WINS
FREE PLAY

Both of the pictures below show Li Long execute two horizontal strikes from the Reverse Scales combination. A good combination causing medium damage.


WIN: 14
CHALLENGER.
LI LONG
VOLDO
20
FREE PLAY

1. REVERSE SCALES

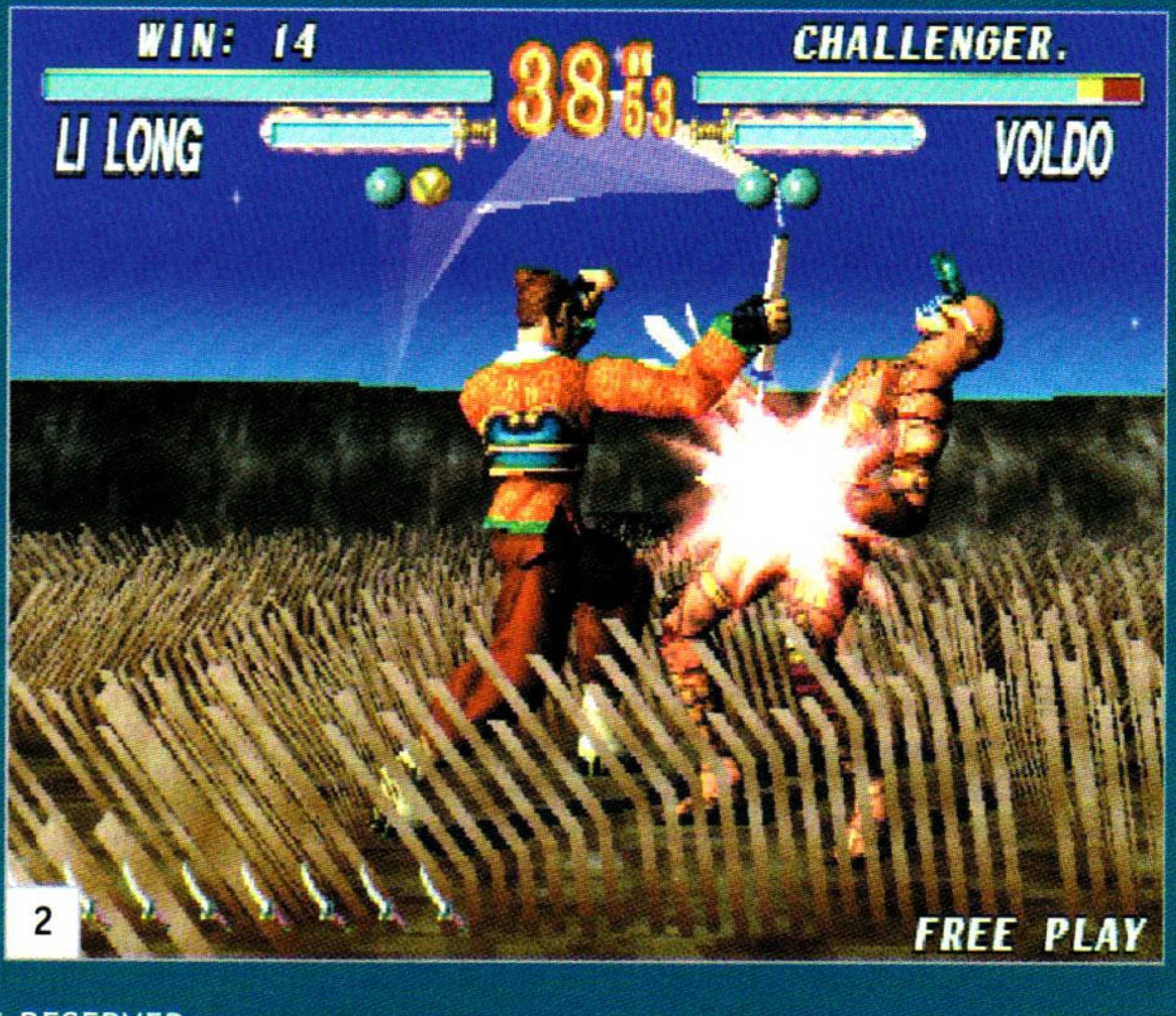
This is one of the techniques that makes Li Long very accessible to Soul Edge novices. Simply pressing the A button three times produce this extremely easy yet effective combination attack. All three attacks are chained and hit horizontally at upper-level. The speed with which they are produced can faze many opponents and is probably the best technique to counter attack. Useful when attempting to ring out an opponent.


WIN: 14
CHALLENGER.
LI LONG
VOLDO
34
FREE PLAY

1

2. FLAMING FANGS

Flaming Fangs is very similar in execution to the Reverse Scales techniques, only it's executed by pressing B three times in a row. Li Long effortlessly swings his nunchuka through three vertical motions in a quick combination that can easily catch his opponents off-guard. Just like


WIN: 14
CHALLENGER.
LI LONG
VOLDO
38
FREE PLAY

2

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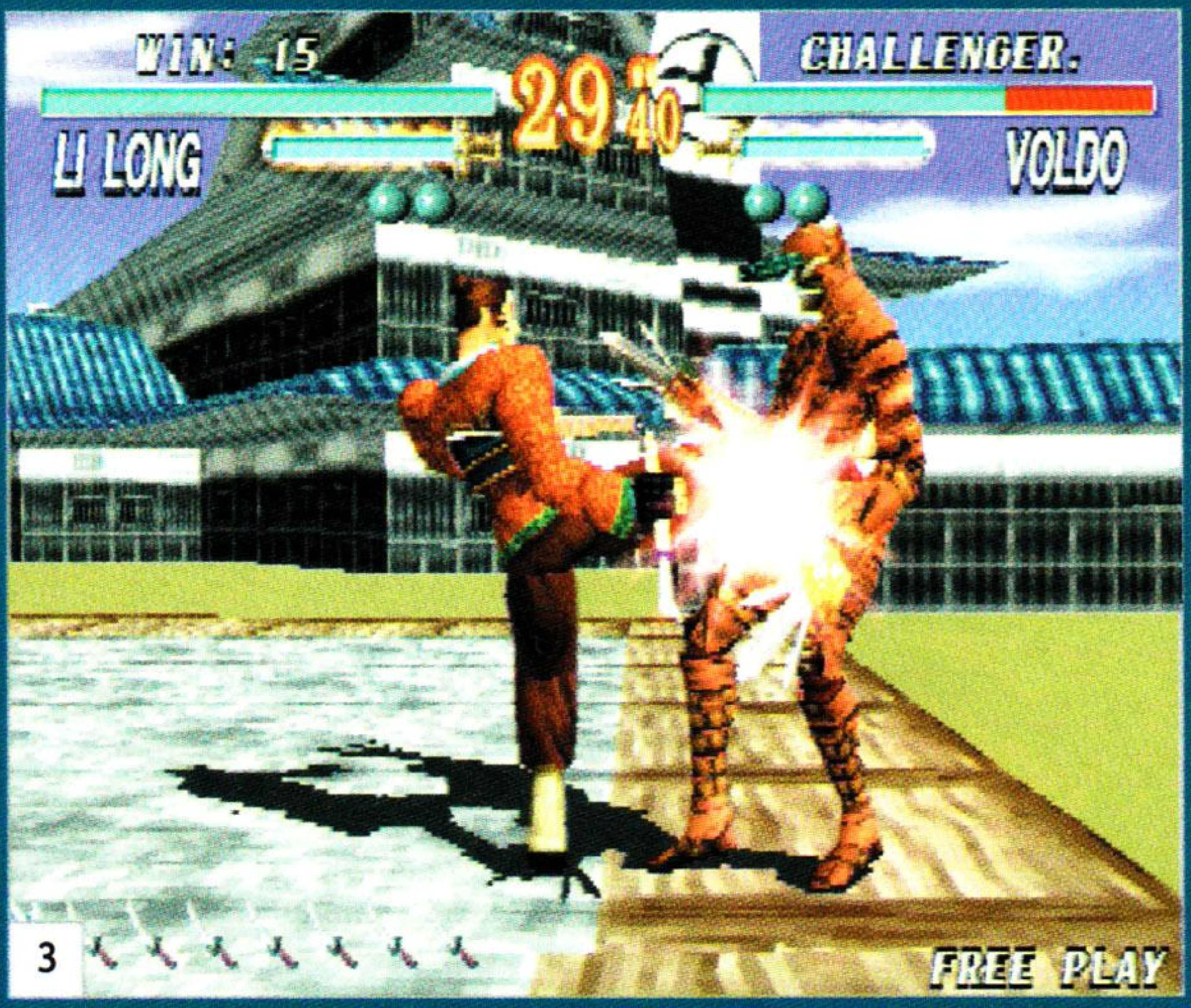
SOUL EDGE

ENRAGED DRAGON ASSASSIN FIGHTS FOR LOST LOVE

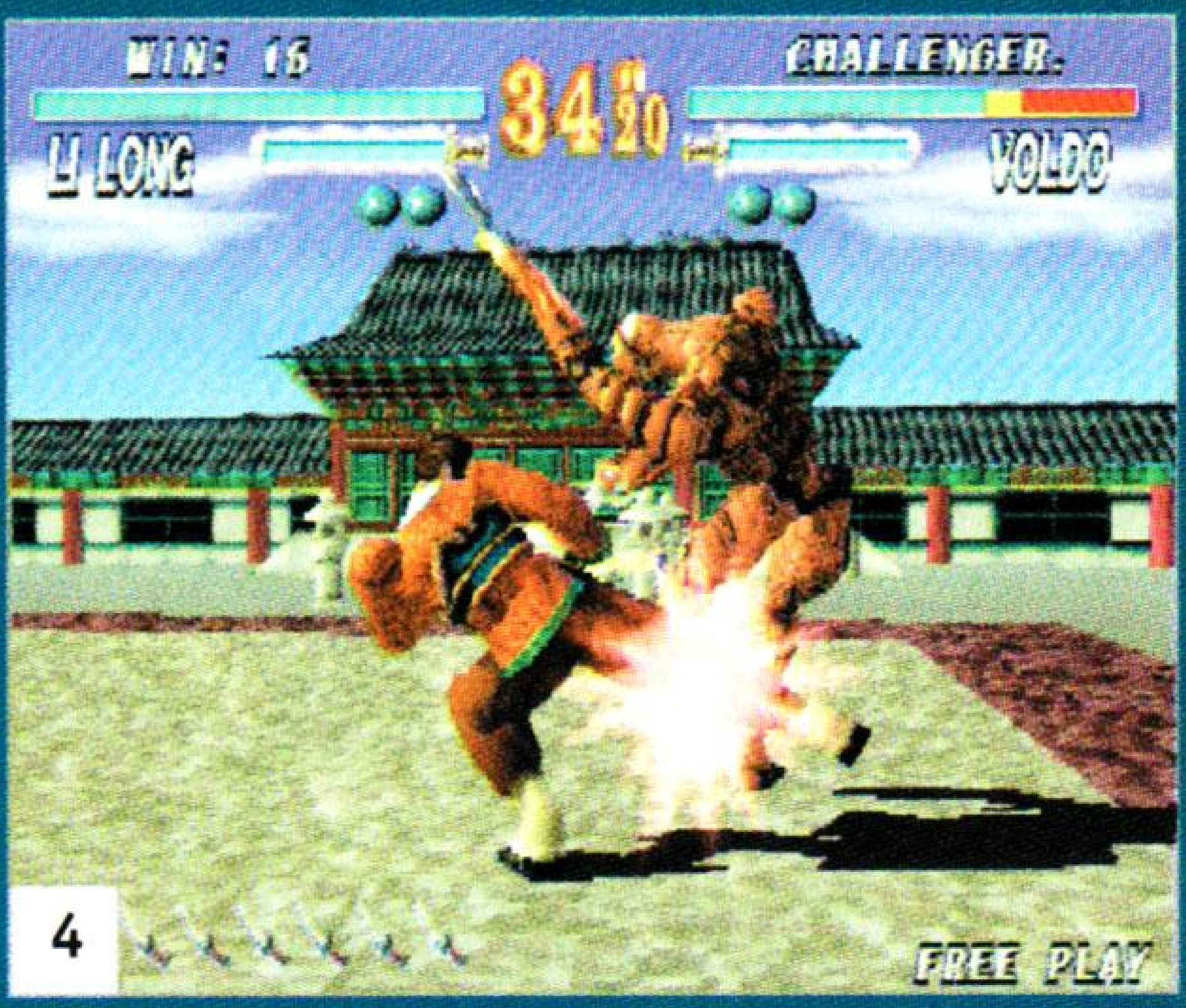

3

the Reverse Scales, this move effortlessly chains all three hits together and when used in conjunction with the afore-mentioned move, it can easily confuse human opponents.

3. Combined Wind

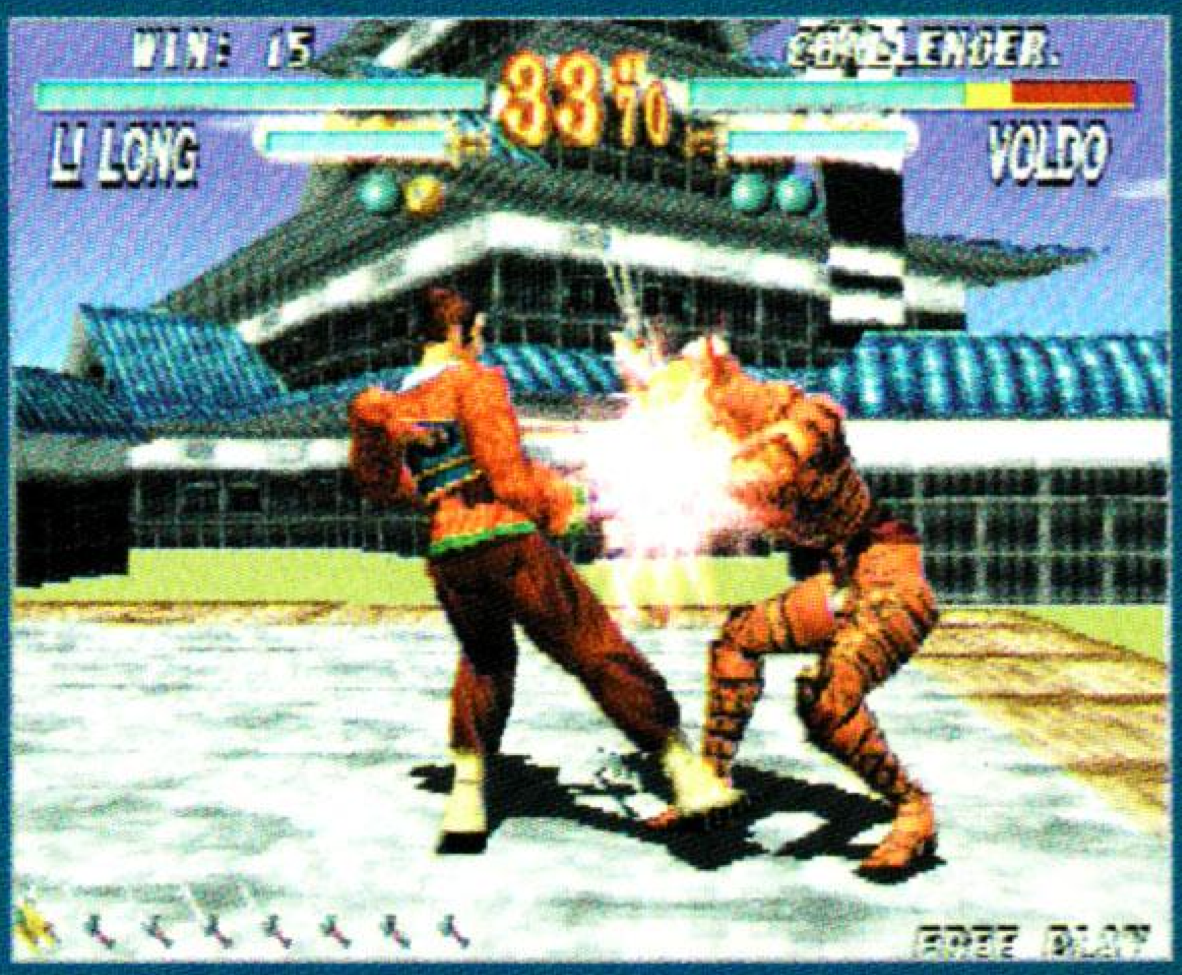
The kick button has to be used for something. Li Long has a couple of kick orientated attacks (literally only a couple) and they are used for the most part to wrong-foot the opponent and send them sprawling. The Combined Wind strike is useful in that it hits twice at mid-level (which is always useful as any Virtua FIghter Sarah Bryant players will tell you). In the normal scheme of things, the kick attacks are only used at close range. However, this particular Li Long attack does have some considerable range.

The lower kick portion of the potent Sand-Dust technique (below).


4

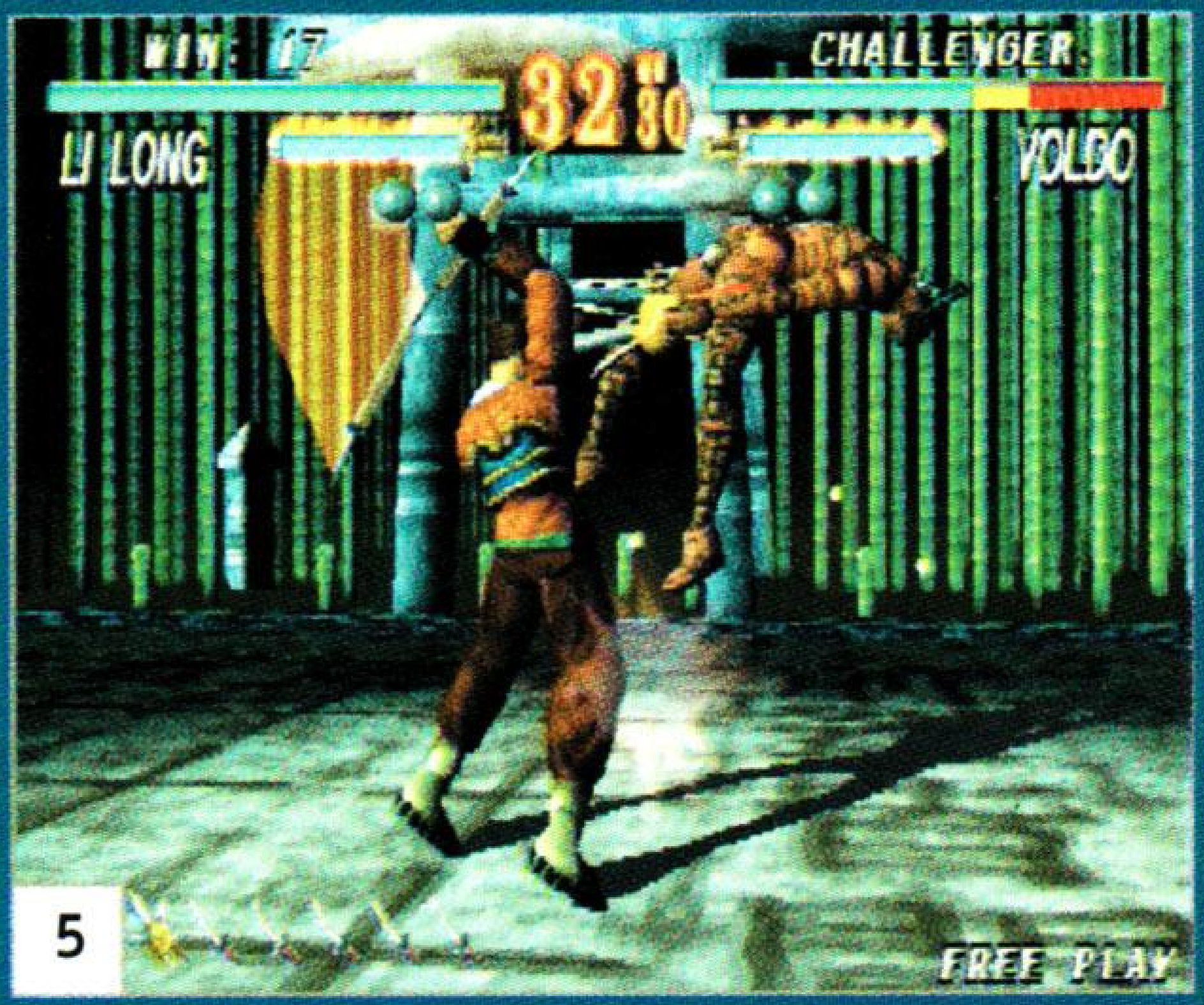
4. Sand-Dust

Li Long's techniques don't seem to be all that varied, but in actual fact his moves offer subtle variations that cause him to hit at different levels. Sand-Dust is a case in point. Superficially it looks similar to the Combined Wind move also described on these pages. However, this time he follows up with a low-attack which can easily cut through the defence of an opponent attempting to counter the Combined Wind. He's certainly a cunning fellow, this Li Long Chap.



5. Flash Destruction

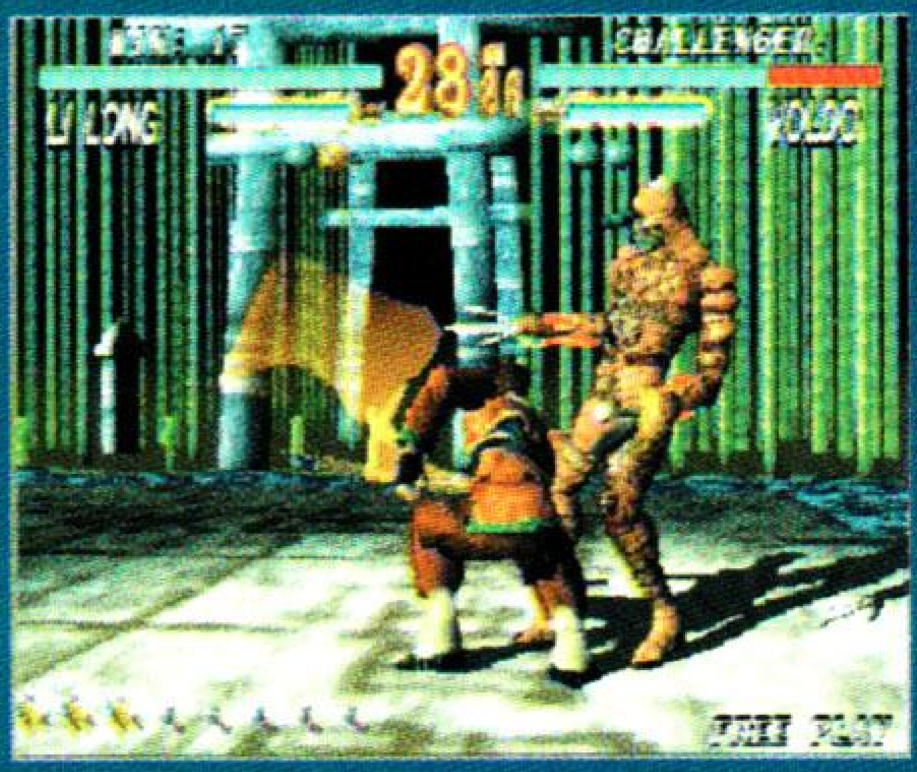
Pressing A and B together produces an excellent two-hit attack that's extremely damaging to Li Long's opponents. It strikes on the difficult mid-level and sends foes flying! It takes a while to execute and it relatively easy for the expert player to counter, but on the aesthetic side, it does produce one of the best on-screen speed flashes seen in a basic attack.


5

[1]*Avenge the death of the beloved Chie!*

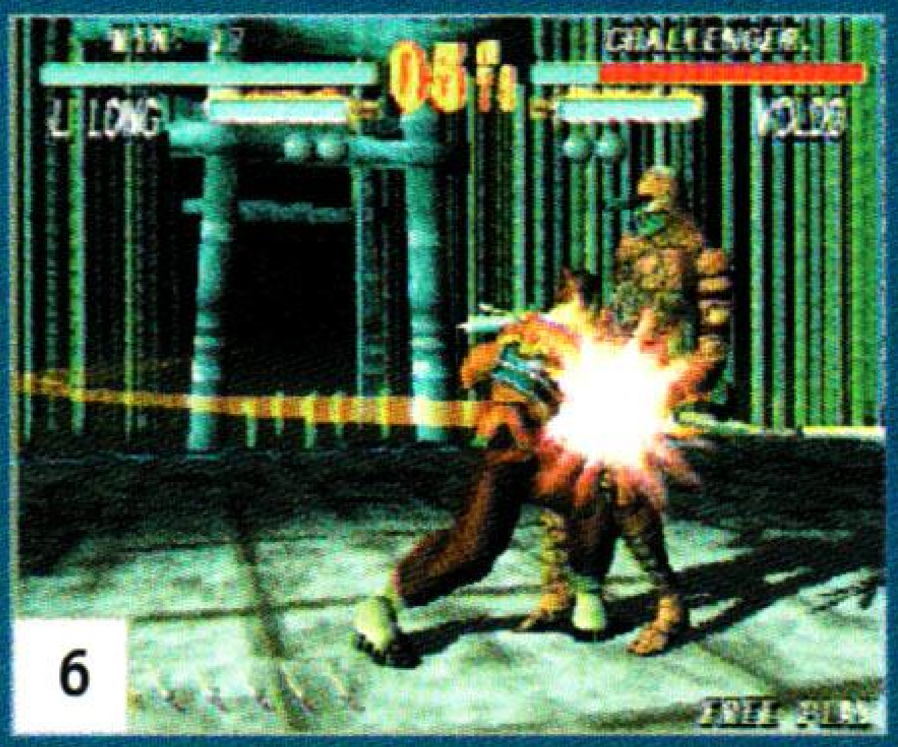
[2]*Execute all the enemies of the Emperor and seek the* **Soul Edge!**

[3]*Prepare a trap for* **Mitsurugi** *at the Upper Chang Jiang river!*



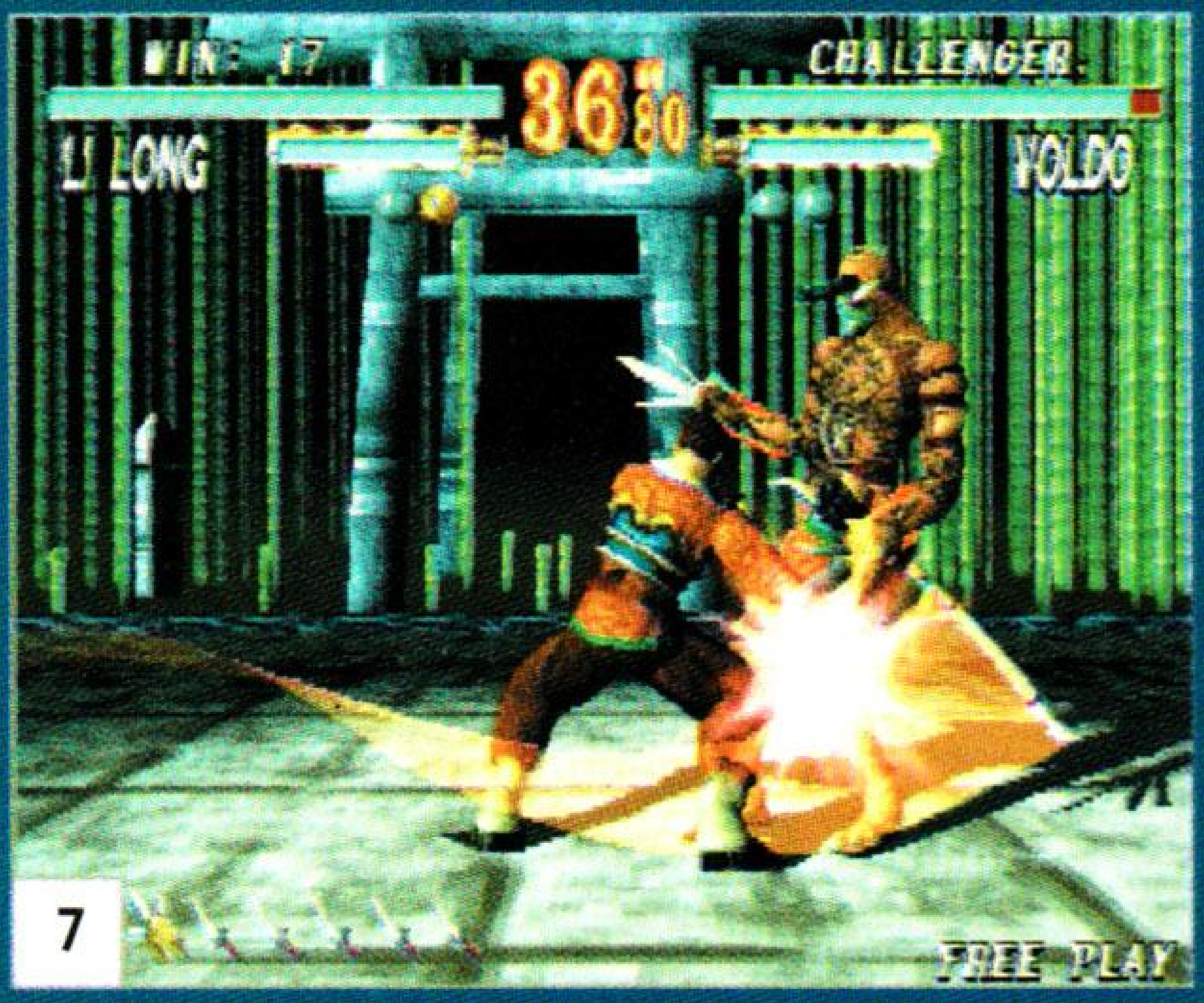
6. Sporting Attack

Although only a single attack, it is a particularly useful technique to have around and seems to cause the CPU player incredible problems (**MAXIMUM** double-perfected the final boss using this technique alone in the pre-production version). Spinning around, Li Long sends his 'chuks flying towards the opponent. A very long range move, inflicting respectable amounts of damage at the all-important mid-body level.


6

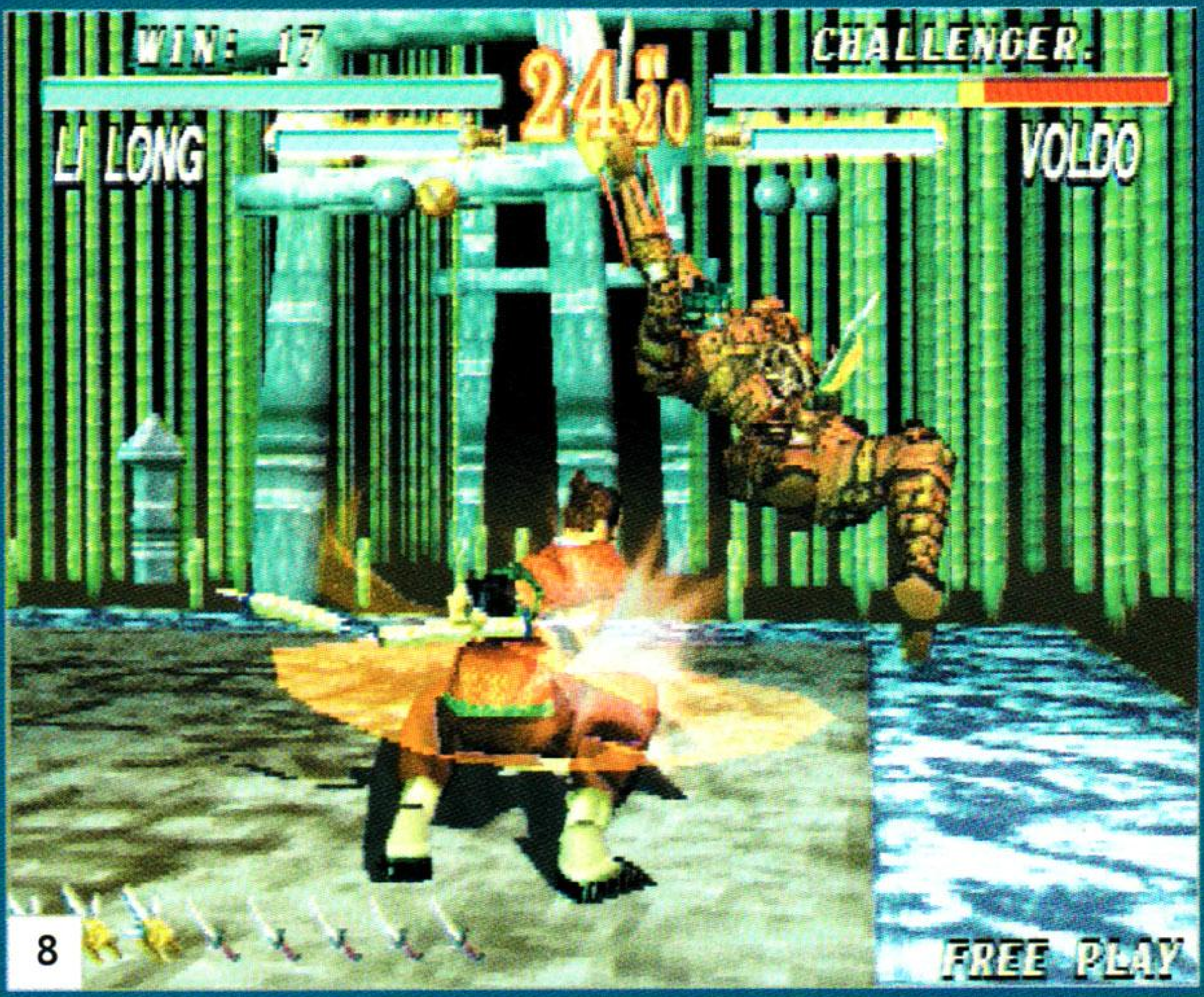
7. Violent Cannon

An attack which does bear some resemblance to the Sporting Attack, although its differences are extreme to the discerning eye. Initiating his nunchuka at a low level, Li Long's foes may be fooled into a crouching guard position. However, the 'chuks hit speedily at the mid-body level - the one area vulnerable in a crouching guard scenario. Damage levels are impressive - expect 100% more damage than the already respectable Sporting Attack.


7

8. Hidden Claws

Spinning around, Li Long uses the momentum generated to swing low at his foe with his nunchuka. Although not as fast as the violent cannon, the speed of the strike is still impressive (and Li Long is a very fast character). A decent long range attack, although powerful, it doesn't deck the opponent, meaning that you can close the distance


8

TAKI

UNDERGROUND HUNTER

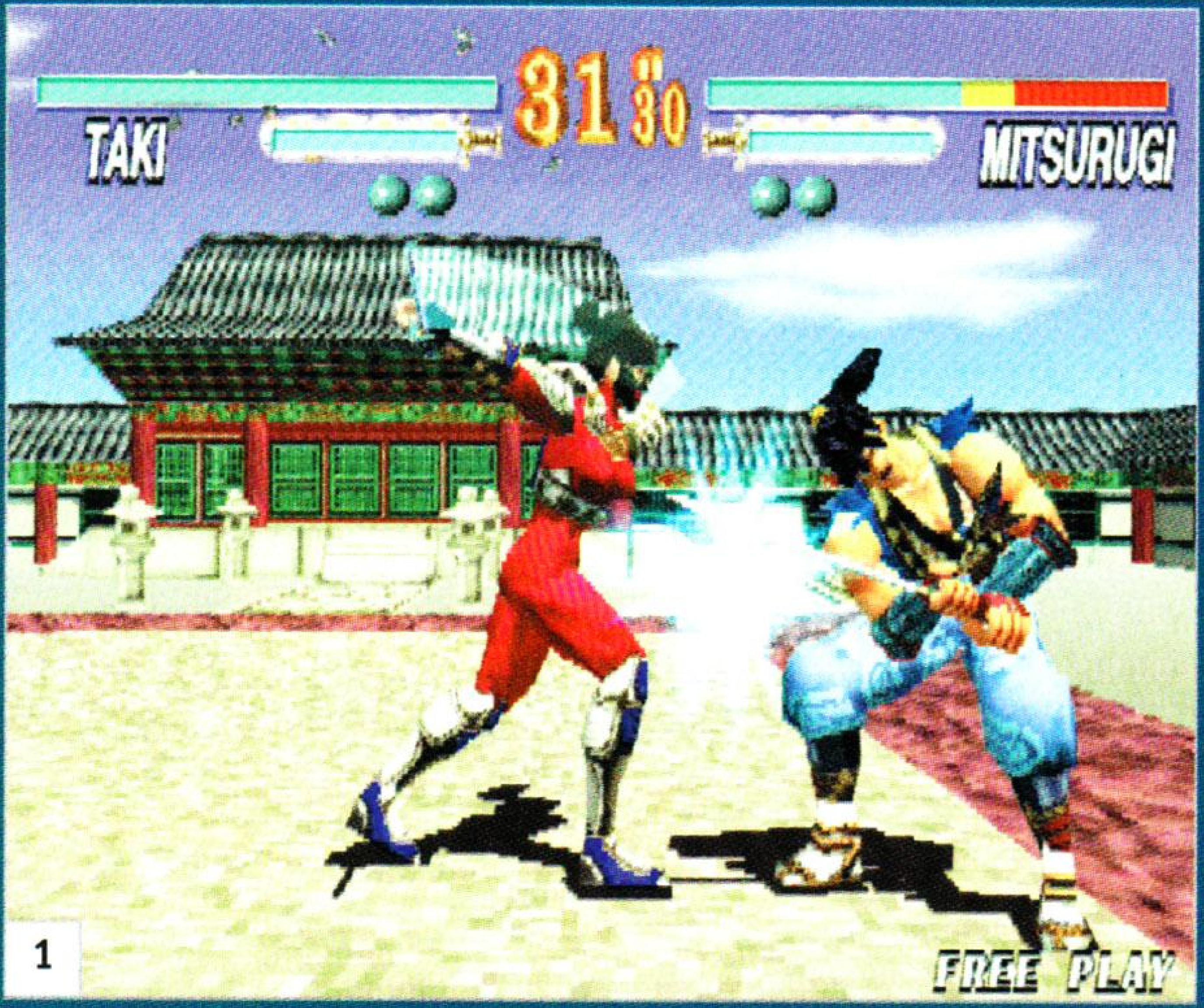
WIN: 1
34
CHALLENGER.
TAKI
MITSURUGI
FREE PLAY

WIN: 5
12
CHALLENGER.
TAKI
MITSURUGI
FREE PLAY

WIN: 1
26
CHALLENGER.
TAKI
MITSURUGI
FREE PLAY

Full Name Taki
Age 22, birthday unknown
Height 5'7" (170cm)
Weight 55kg
Blood Type A
Family Parents and brothers deceased
Weaponry Rekki-Maru (Japanese sword)
Discipline Dream Slashed Swordian, sensei: Toki
Stage The sealed shrine surrounded by bamboo forest

"I WOULD SEARCH ANYWHERE TO STRENGTHEN MY BELOVED KATANA!"


31
TAKI
MITSURUGI
FREE PLAY

1

IN THE mediaevil, warlike age, Taki was a ninja who defied convention by *not* lending her stealthy services to warlords and barons. Ninja literally means "a man who lives in the shadow of society" and it is by this motto that Taki lived. By staying faithful to the true meaning of the ninja, Taki was granted extra powers which she used to exorcise evil demons. One day, she managed to kill a particularly troublesome apparition with but one slash of her home-made Katana 'Rekki-maru'. This came as a surprise to Taki as the sword was previously incapable of terminating ghosts. Realising that her blade was resonating with the power of another sword (the Soul Edge, presumably), Taki set off to find this powerful artifact.

Taki is the ninja assassin who has found herself gunning for the mysterious Soul Edge. No-one knows her true reasons for entering the fight, but her powerful attacking approach and devastating "sure-fire fatal techniques" have attracted her a great deal of attention. The fact that she blocks with the backs of her hands - combined with her slightly alien body language and near-robotic voice have led many to wonder about the true origins of this enigmatic warrior...

WIN: 3
24
CHALLENGER.
TAKI
MITSURUGI
FREE PLAY

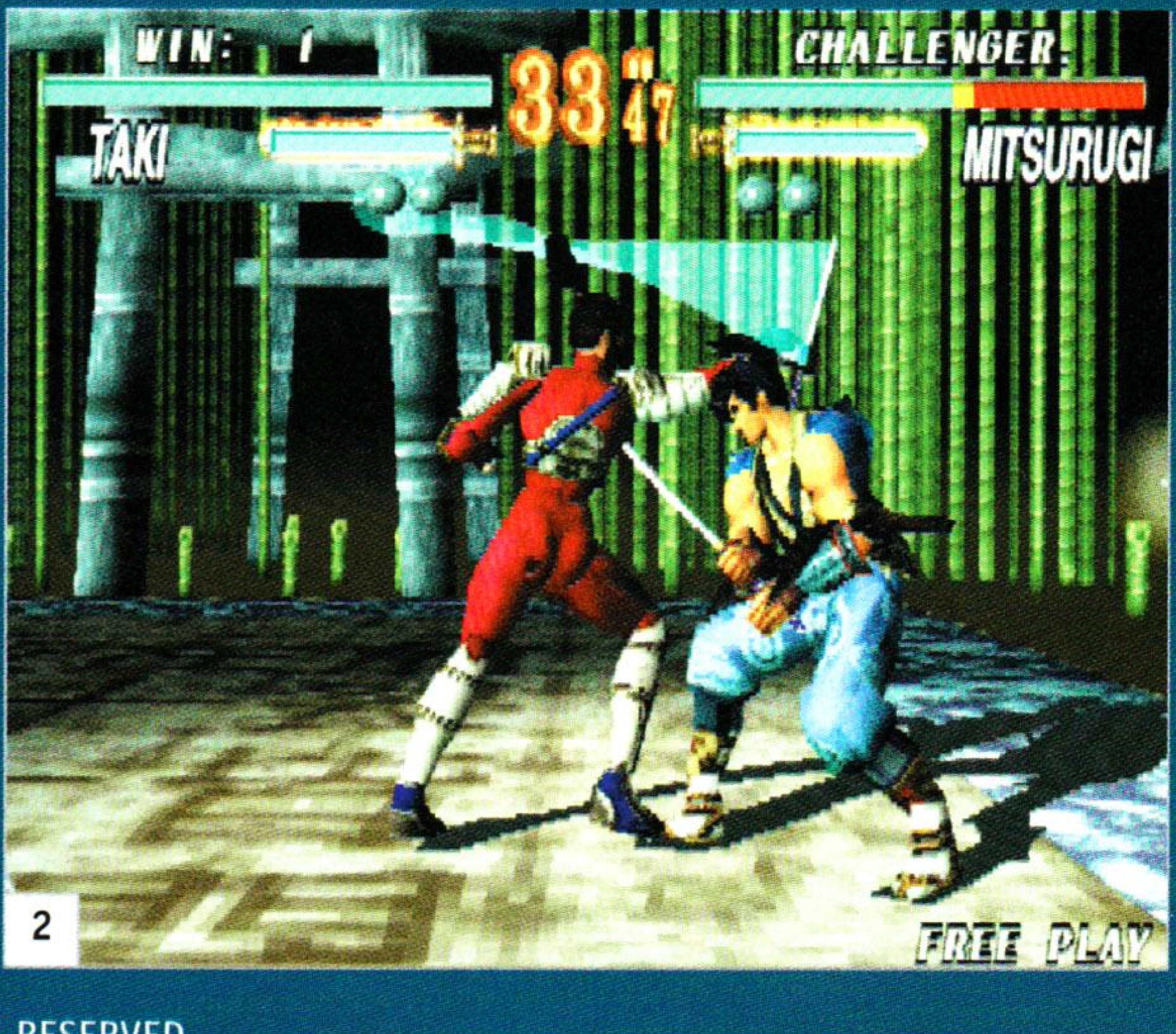
1. COMBINED ELBOW CUTS

This flurry is three high blows is very quick to execute, chains adequately and is thus useful as a countering measure. However, like a greater many of the triple combo attacks in Soul Edge, there is a delay before the third hit connects, during which an opponent's guard (or worse Guard Impact) can be executed.

2. COMBINED CONQUEST

Although seemingly similar to the Combined Elbow Cuts attack, there are a number of significant differences here. For a start, although

This picture shows off the Combined Conquest manoeuvre, which can be mixed with the Combined Elbow Cuts to confuse human opponents.


WIN: 1
33
CHALLENGER.
TAKI
MITSURUGI
FREE PLAY

2

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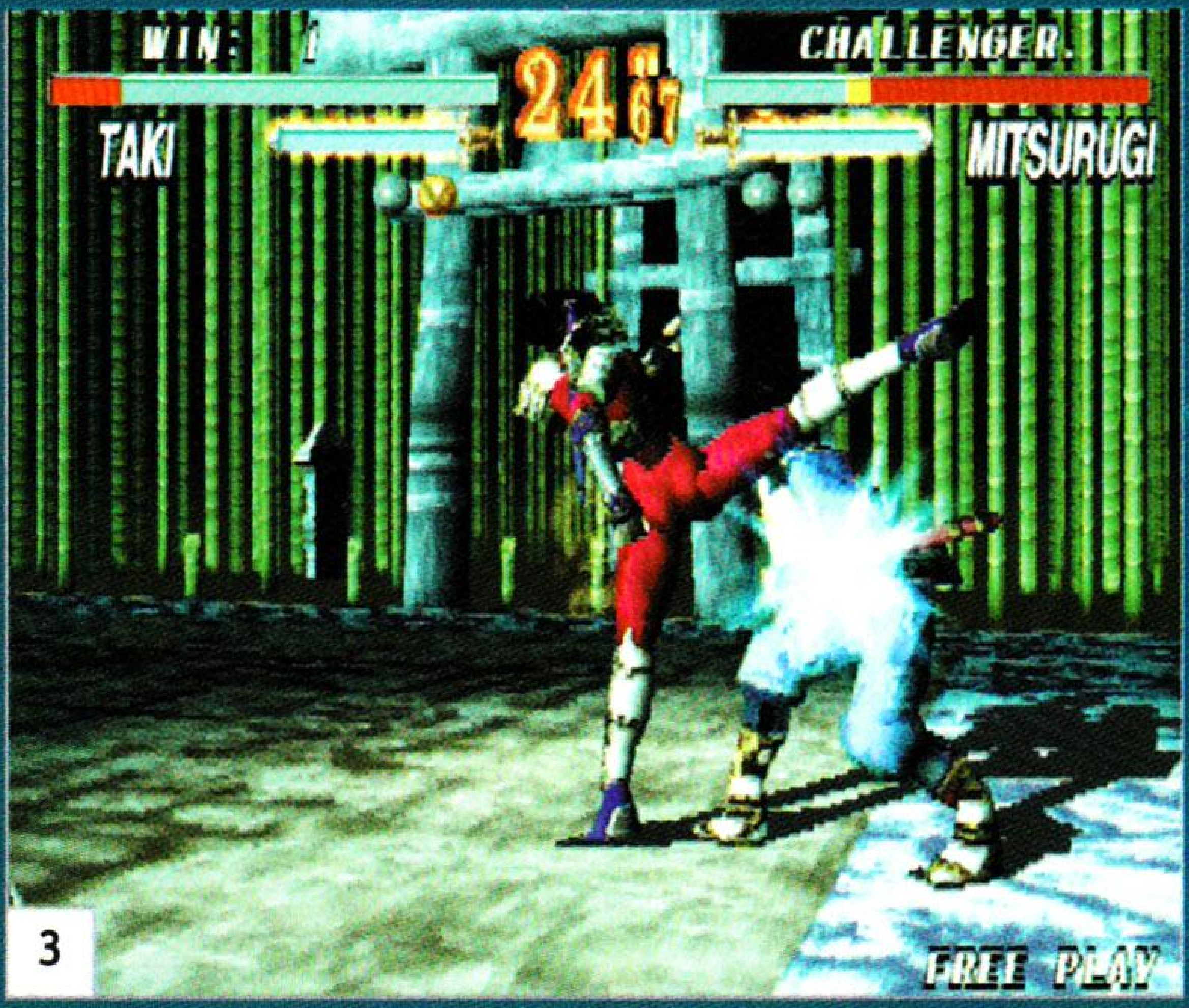
Ninja ghost slayer battling the evil spirits

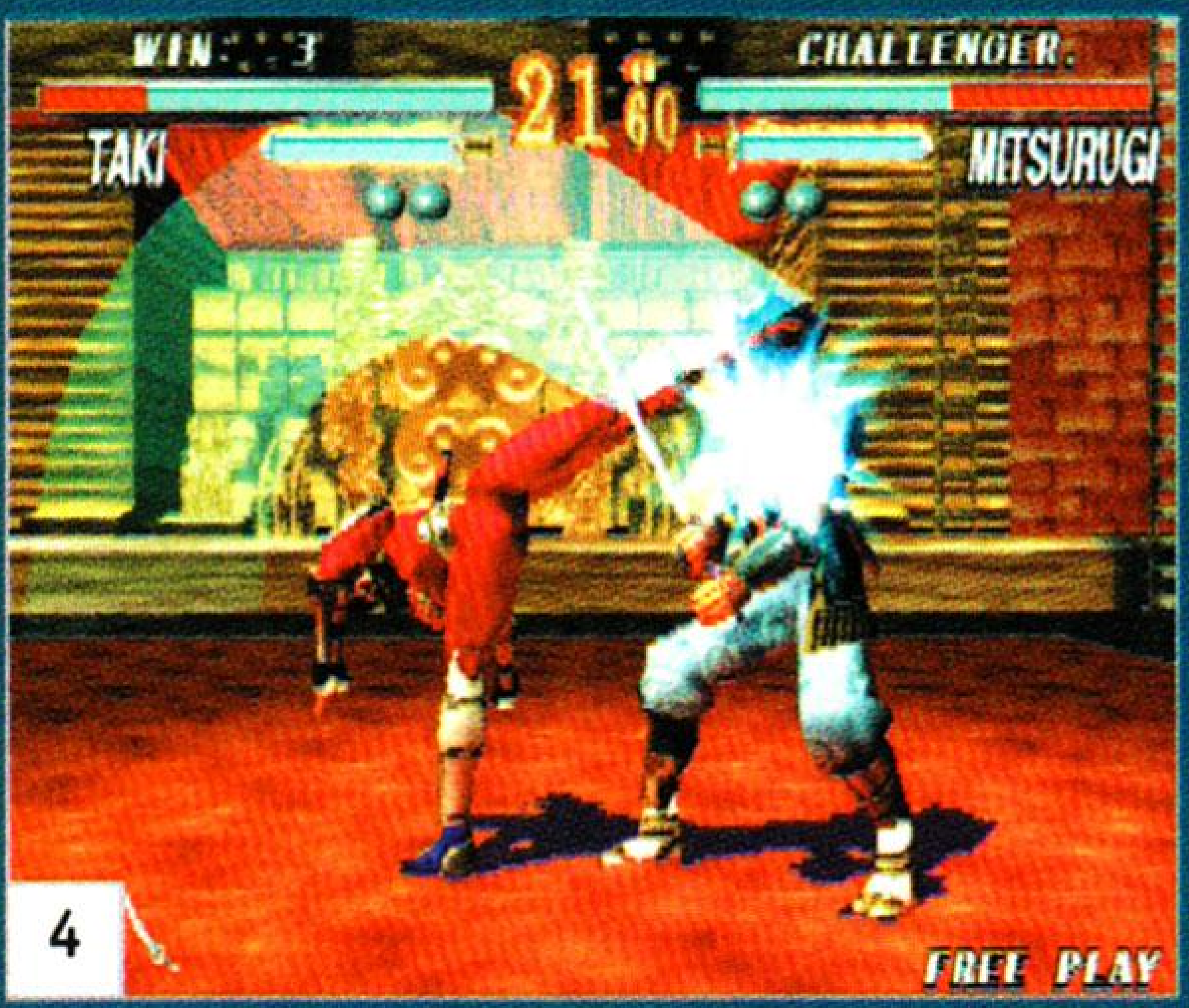
slower to begin, all three moves chain together as a triple mid-level combination. Useful and powerful.


WIN: 1
CHALLENGER.
24 67
TAKI
MITSURUGI
FREE PLAY

3

3. Three-Hit Punishment

A very good three level attack, which has a very high success rate. All hits are scored high and inflict respectable amounts of damage. Also, if all three connect, the opponent should be prone, leaving them open to a pounce. Activated as a chain of three kicks, this is an extremely simple technique to master and doesn't require the use of any weaponry!


WIN: 3
CHALLENGER.
21 60
TAKI
MITSURUGI
FREE PLAY

4

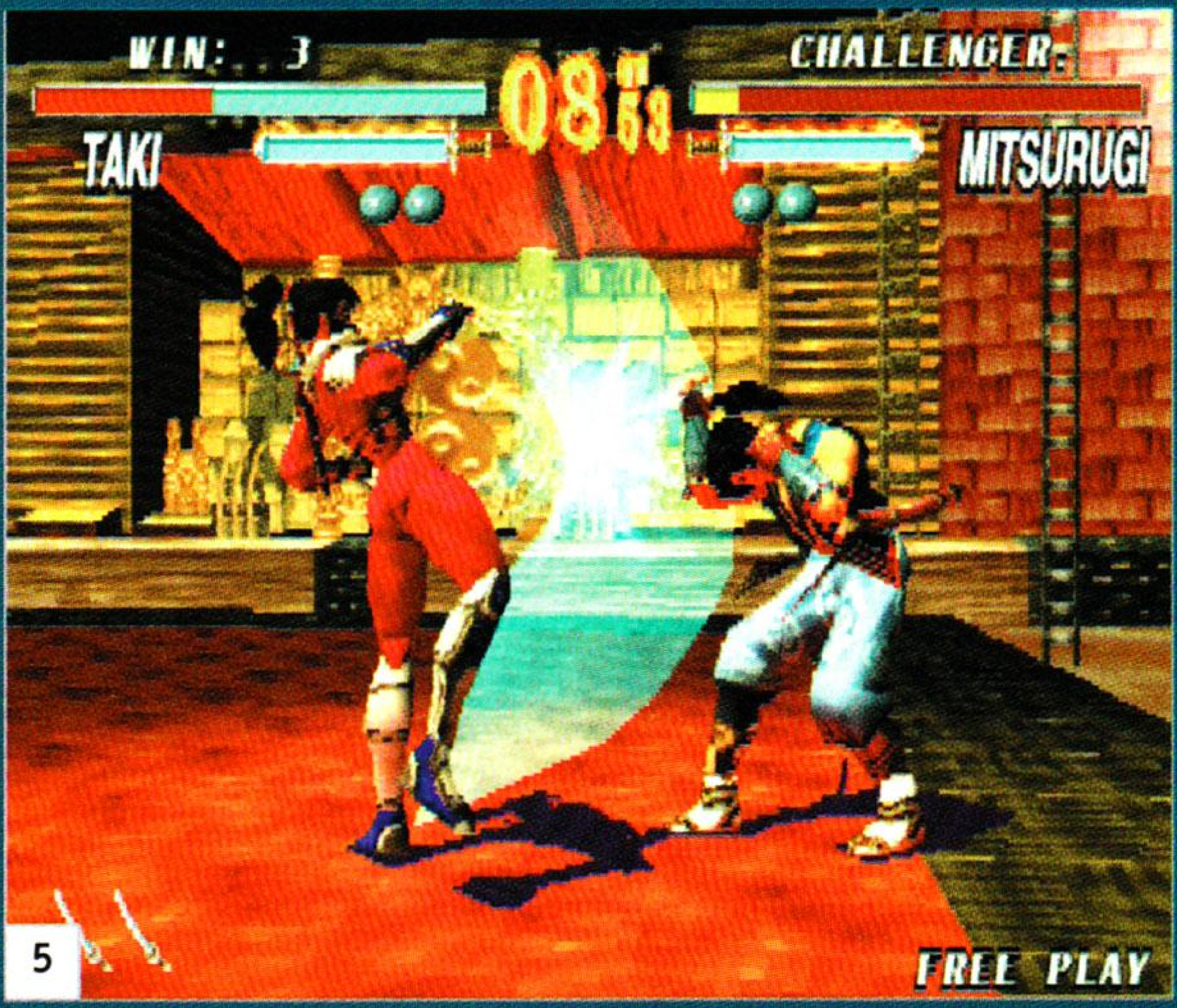
4. Karma Crush

Although Taki is kitted out with a decent enough sword, she tends to use her legs for many of her attacks, meaning that she is the character who makes most use of the kick button. The Karma Crush is activated with forward and kick and causes Taki to produce a powerful crescent kick which hits at a mid-level and has a great range and power to it.

WIN: 2
CHALLENGER.
27 10
TAKI
MITSURUGI
FREE PLAY

5. Forceful Punishment

This is a useful two-level kick that sweeps from low into mid-levels (making it quite difficult to guard against effectively). Although quite damaging, it doesn't deck Taki's foes, meaning that she can immediately strike again with another technique (Creeping Ivy is recommended).

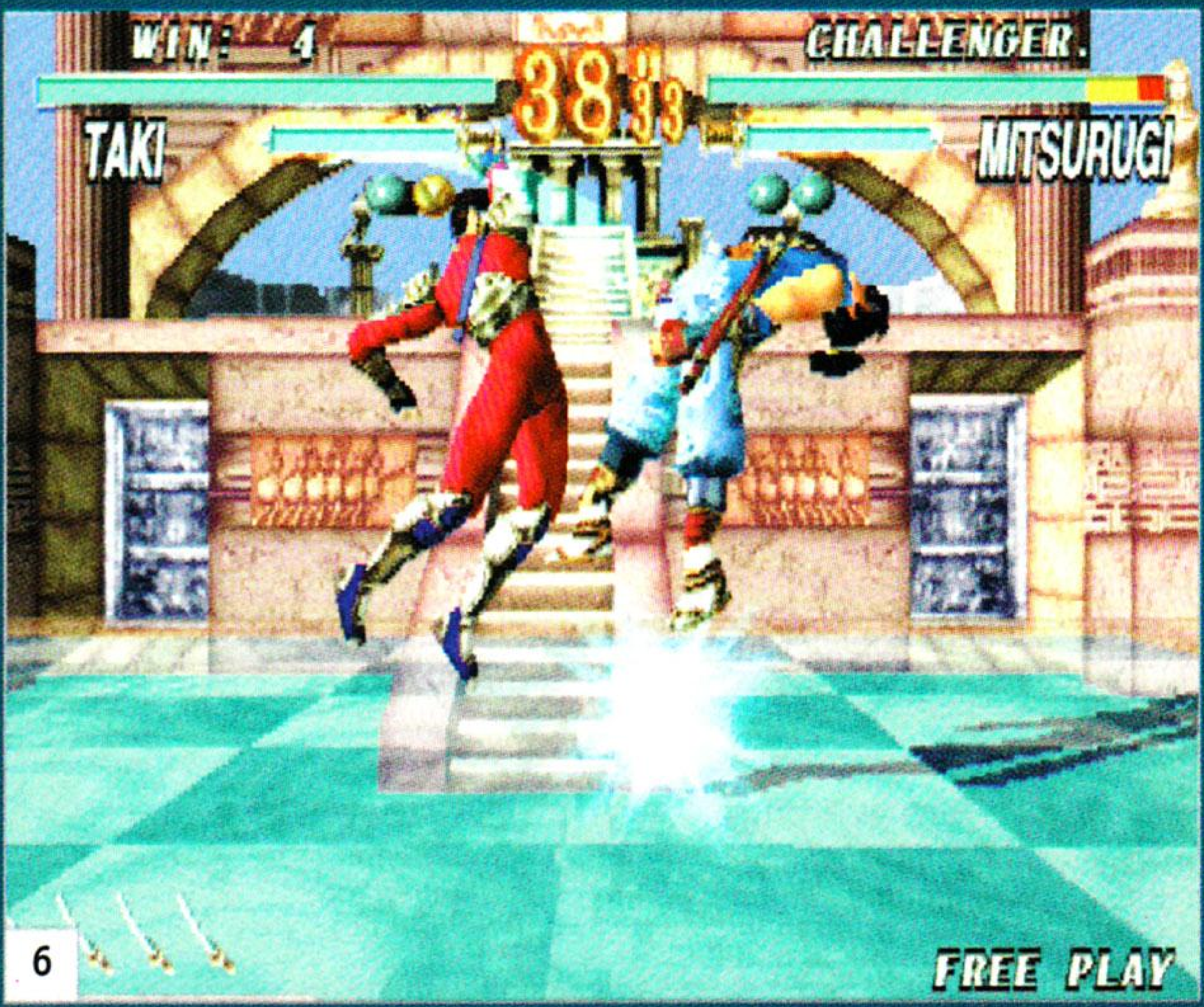

WIN: 3
CHALLENGER.
08 53
TAKI
MITSURUGI
FREE PLAY

5

[1] Travel the country and conquer the dark apparitions that threaten innocent folk!

[2] Empower the spiritual katana **'Rekki-maru'** with the force of Soul Edge!

[3] Learn the ancient arts from **Toki** the Ninja master!

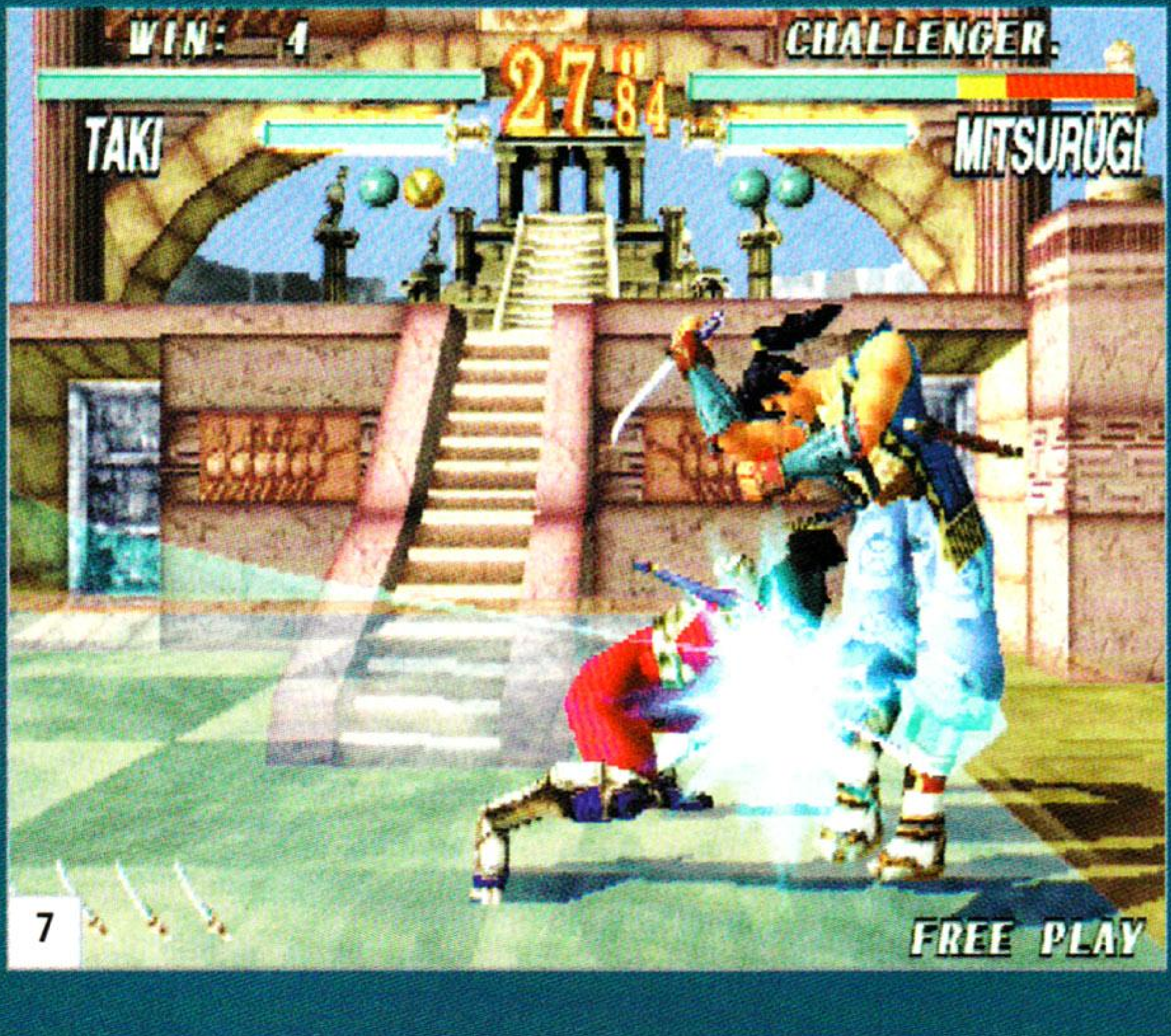

WIN: 4
CHALLENGER.
38 33
TAKI
MITSURUGI
FREE PLAY

6

The Creeping Ivy technique below ends up with Taki producing a sudden low-cut move against her foe. A surprising move with medium damage levels.

6. Tempestuous Carriage

Coming in close to her opponent, Taki engages a powerful lunging uppercut. It's disastrous if the move doesn't connect as Taki is left so vulnerable. However, during the motion required to engage the move, Taki can feint and produce a kick instead. This prevents the main move from being executed - a good plan if you feel that you would be blocked and countered.


WIN: 4
CHALLENGER.
27 84
TAKI
MITSURUGI
FREE PLAY

7

7. Creeping Ivy

Charged with mystical energy, Taki surges forward with her blade. Tremendous power is channeled through the blade, resulting in one prone opponent should the attack hit home. The attack hits low with Taki dropping at the last minute making this a surprising low-level attack for an unprepared adversary.

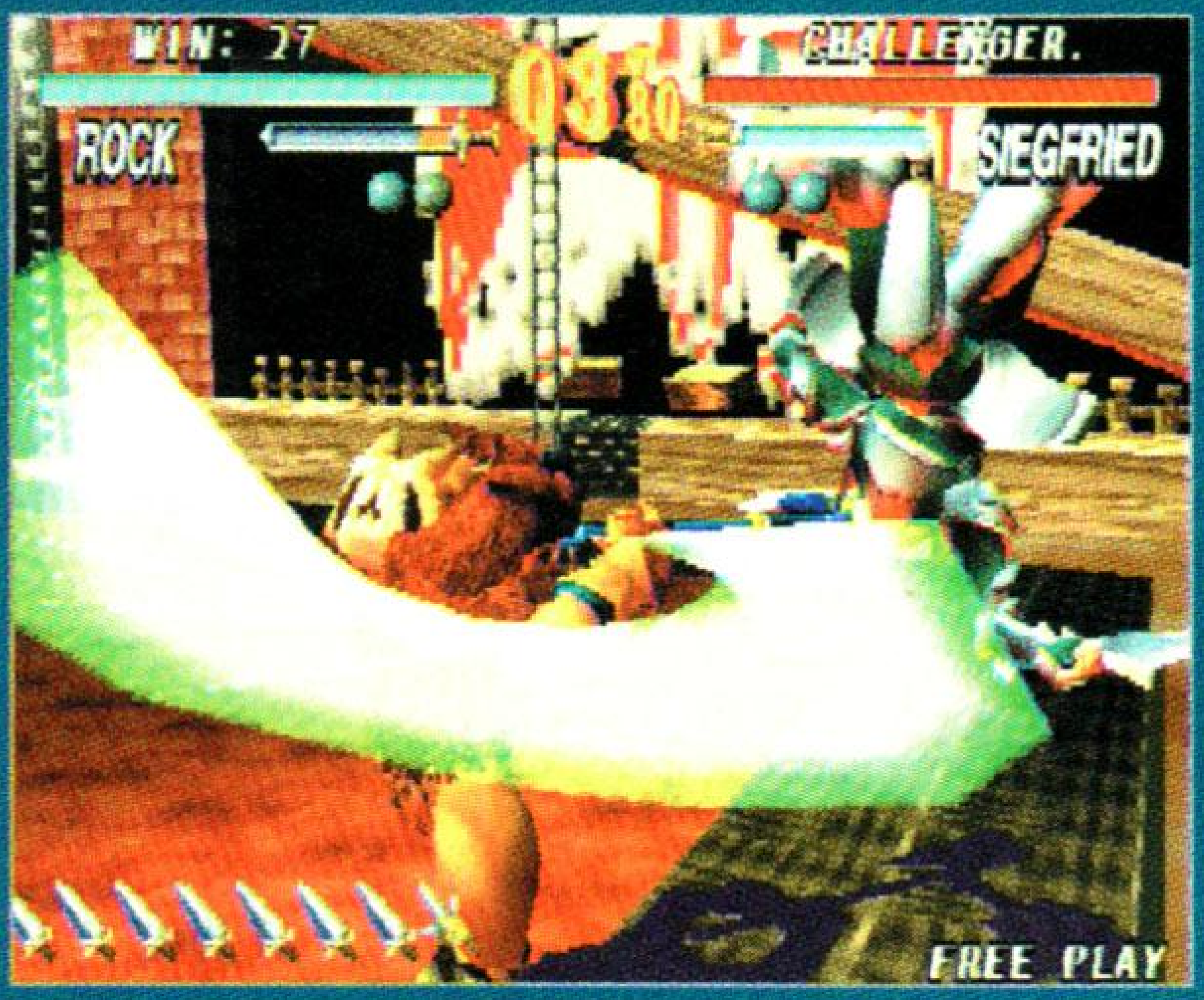
WIN: 5
CHALLENGER.
35 43
TAKI
MITSURUGI
FREE PLAY

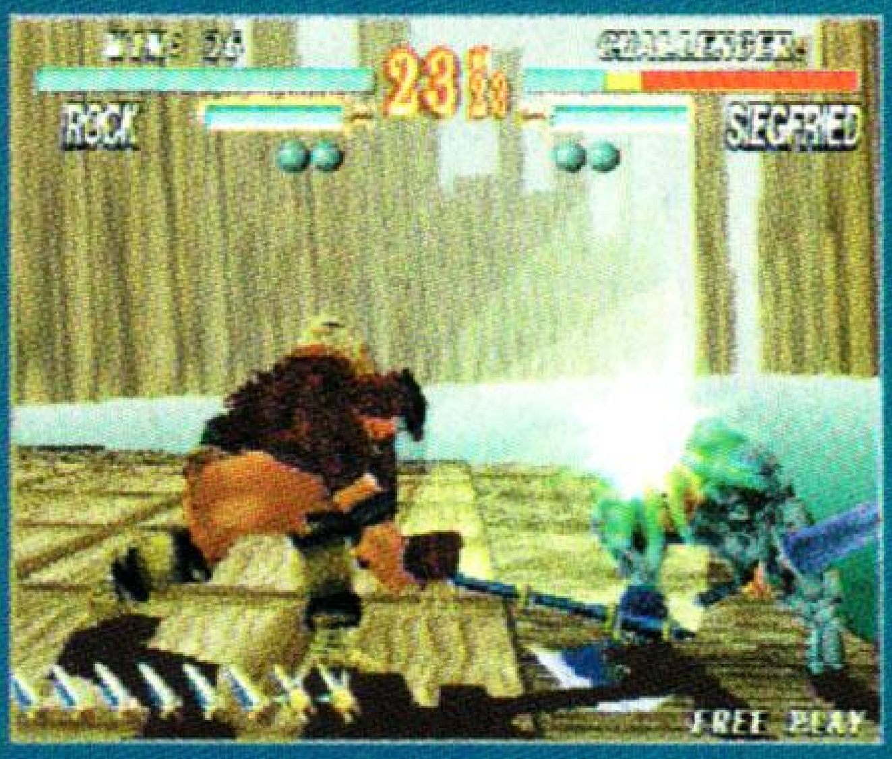
8. Punishment from Heaven

Although Taki is decked out with an impressive range of combinations and suchlike, she tends to be most effective at close-range strikes. The Punishment from Heaven attack is actually long-range, allowing for plenty more variety in your Taki play. Taking the form of a powerful kick, this Taki technique *must* be mastered!

ROCK

RECKLESS COMMANDO! CHILD OF THE WILDERNESS!


WIN: 27
CHALLENGER.
ROCK
SIEGFRIED
03 30
FREE PLAY


ROCK
SIEGFRIED
FREE PLAY

In terms of raw bludgeoning power, Rock is second to none, with the pictures above being great examples of his vertical and horizontal attacking power.

Full Name Rock Adams
Age 35, born December 14
Height 5'10" (175cm)
Weight 180 pounds
Blood Type Unknown
Family Mother, Father (Lost)
Weaponry Battle Axe
Discipline Freestyle
Stage Arid area in Central America

WIN: 20
CHALLENGER.
ROCK
SIEGFRIED
15 63
FREE PLAY

"IF I LOCATE THE SOUL EDGE I MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIND MY PARENTS"!

WIN: 23
CHALLENGER.
ROCK
SIEGFRIED
00 00
ROCK WINS
FREE PLAY

DESPITE HIS rather odd name and native appearance, Rock is actually born to an Englishman - an antique shop owner by trade who one day comes across the Soul Edge sword buried beneath of a pile of antique trash. Rock's father immediately knows what he has discovered and returns home, excited by his discovery. However, Rock himself immediately begins to distrust the sword, his feelings emanating from a purely instinctual level.

On a voyage to the new America, Rock's family is attacked at sea by the feared pirate Captain Cervantes - renowned as the most powerful, dread butcher of the oceans. The pirate captain had been contracted by Vercci, an Italian death merchant, to storm the ship and seize the Soul Edge.

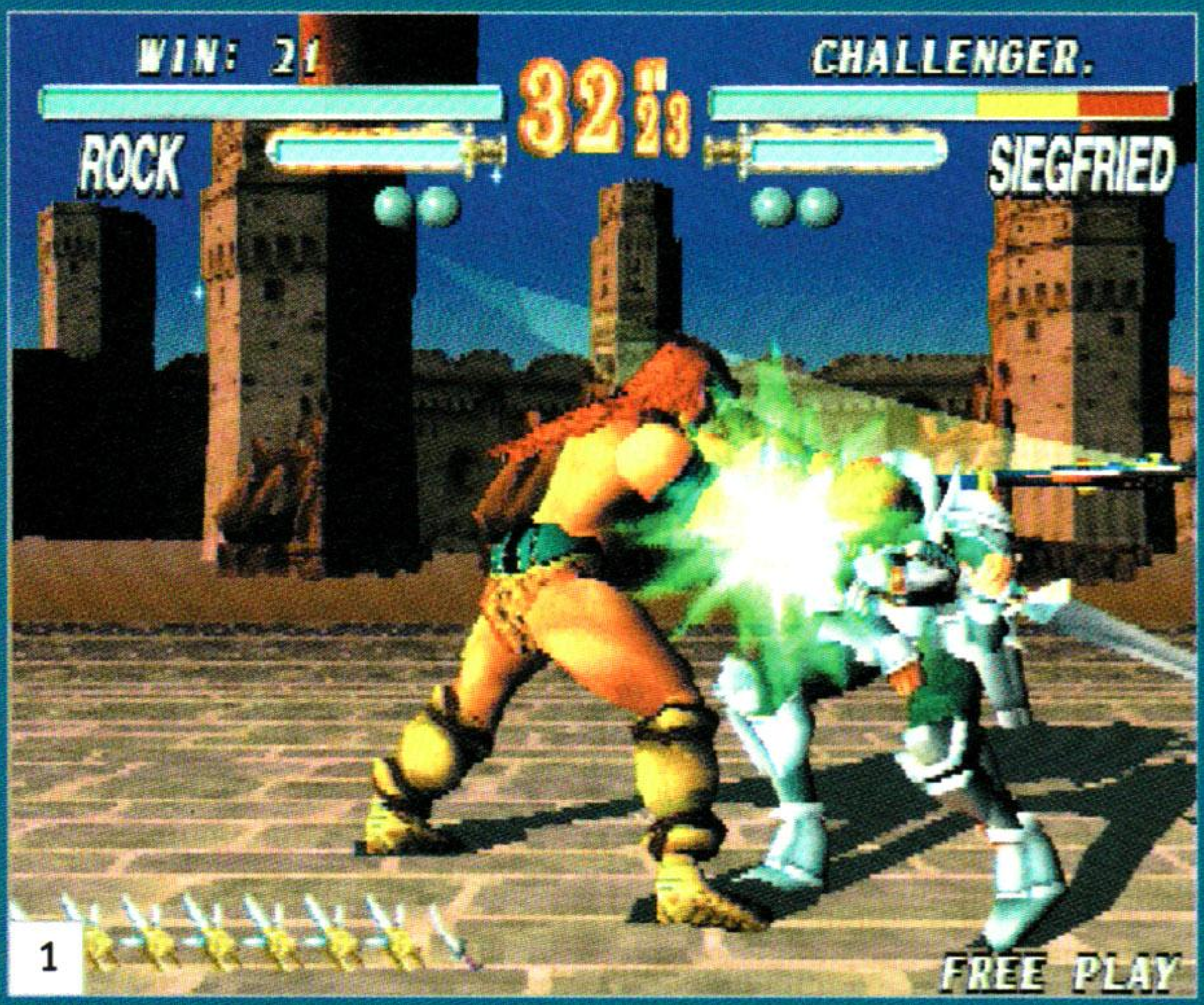
The lives of those on board mean nothing to Cervantes and the ship soon sinks to the ocean floor. Rock is thrown overboard and somehow makes it to the land, but the final fate of his parents remains a mystery. Growing up in the American wilderness, Rock becomes skilled with the battle axe and when his techniques reach their peak, he sets out to find the Soul Edge and perhaps discover what happened to his family. Will he succeed? That's up to you...

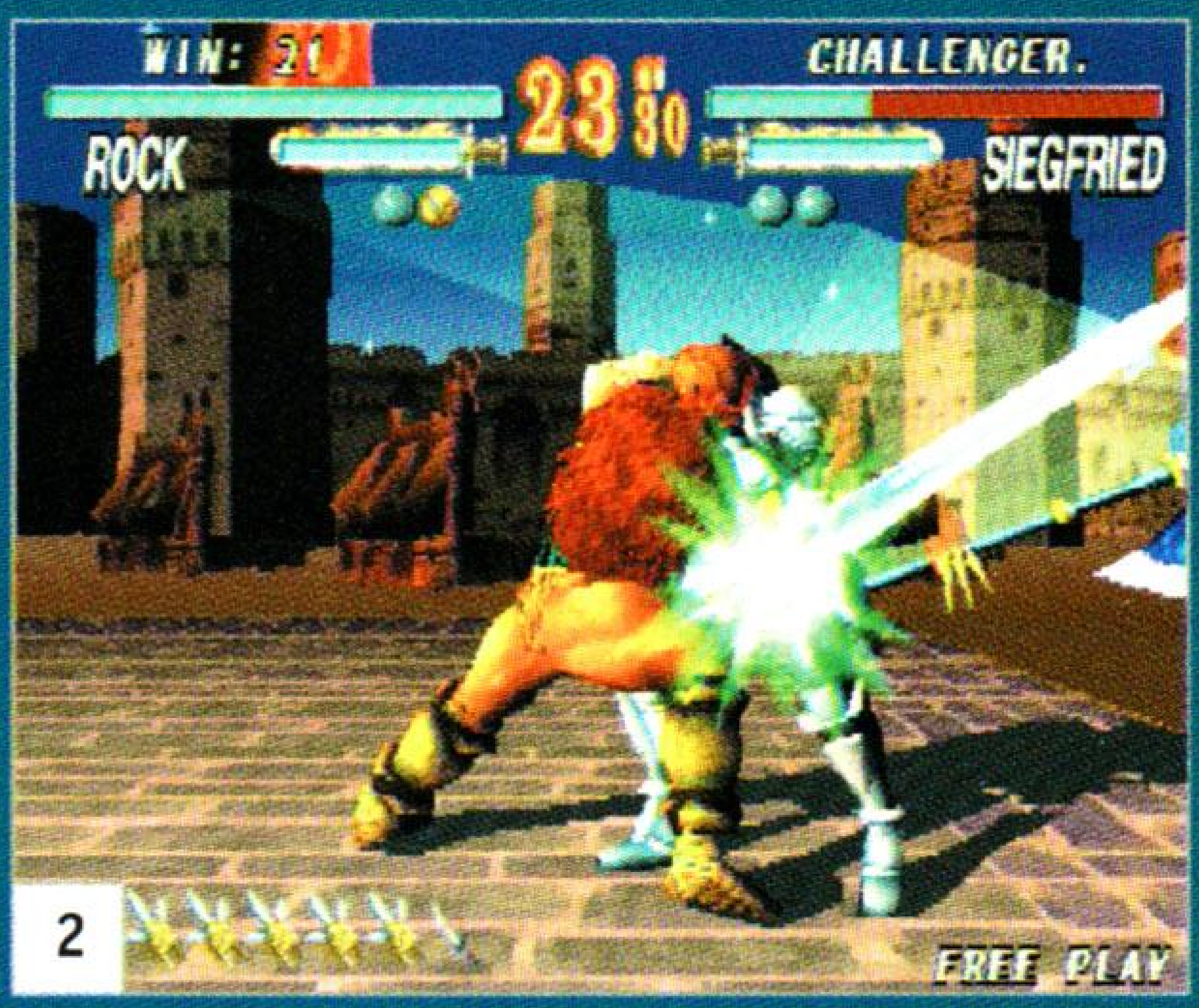
1. TYPHOON AXE

A great many of the characters in Soul Edge have simple combinations originating from three presses of the A button. As expected, Rock is no exception. A fast attack with plenty of power, this doesn't down an opponent, which can lead to Rock's foes regaining the initiative. Like almost all of Rock's attacks the length of the axe gives him considerable reach in a wide arc. Useful for clipping opponents who attempt a side step.

2. ROCK CRUSHER

In many ways this is similar to the Typhoon Axe, in that three hits are inflicted. However, this technique starts with a vertical attack and leads into two thrusts, which deck Rock's foe. The first move is difficult to use at close range owing to the timing and range involved with the move.


1
WIN: 21
CHALLENGER.
ROCK
SIEGFRIED
32 23
FREE PLAY


2
WIN: 21
CHALLENGER.
ROCK
SIEGFRIED
23 30
FREE PLAY

WIN: 27
CHALLENGER.
ROCK
SIEGFRIED
03 00
FREE PLAY

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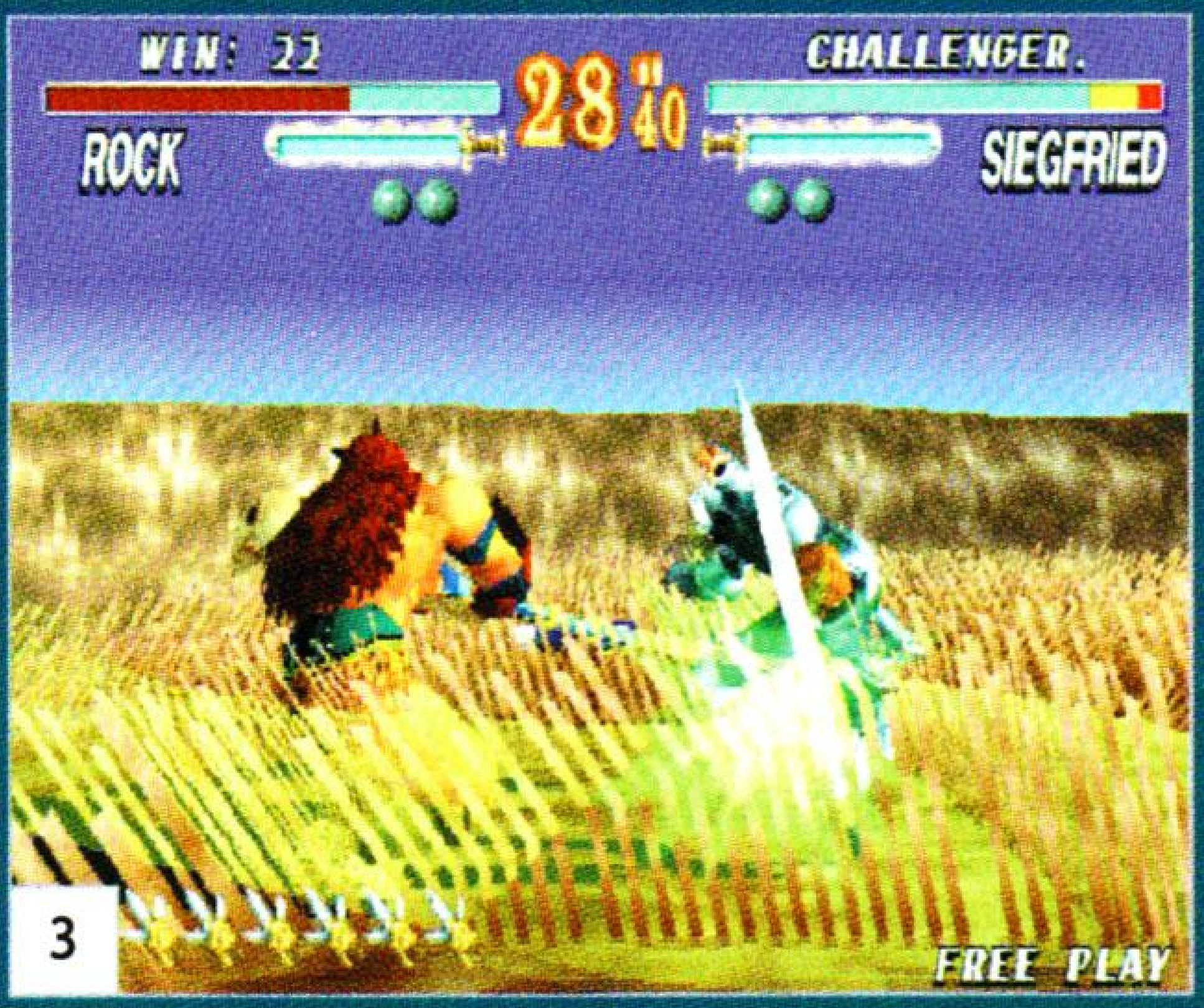
SOUL EDGE

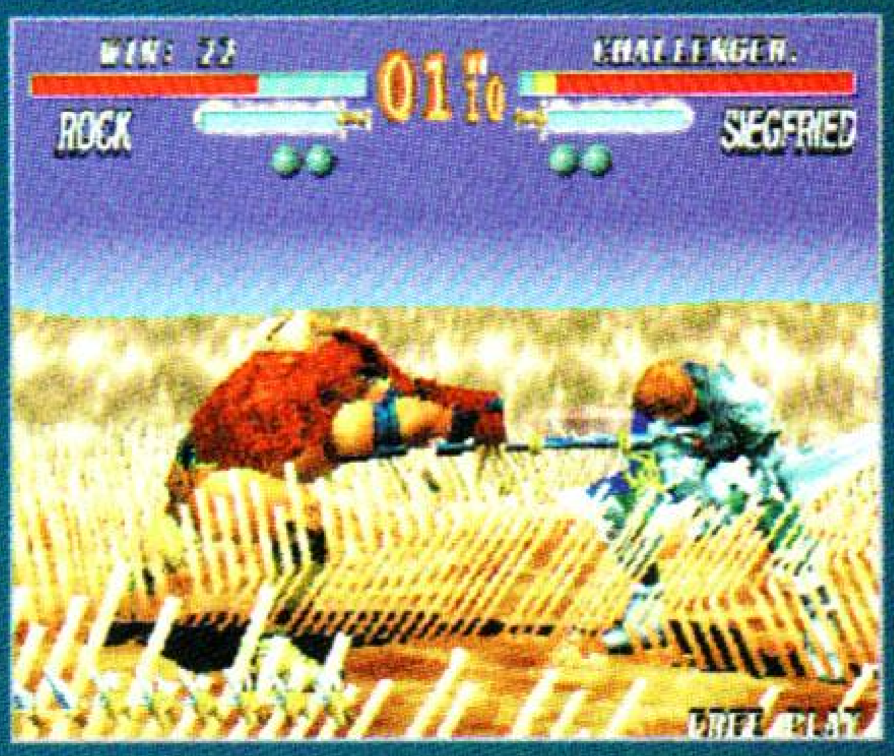
Wielder of the Mighty Battle Axe!


WIN: 22
28 40
CHALLENGER.
ROCK
SIEGFRIED
FREE PLAY

3

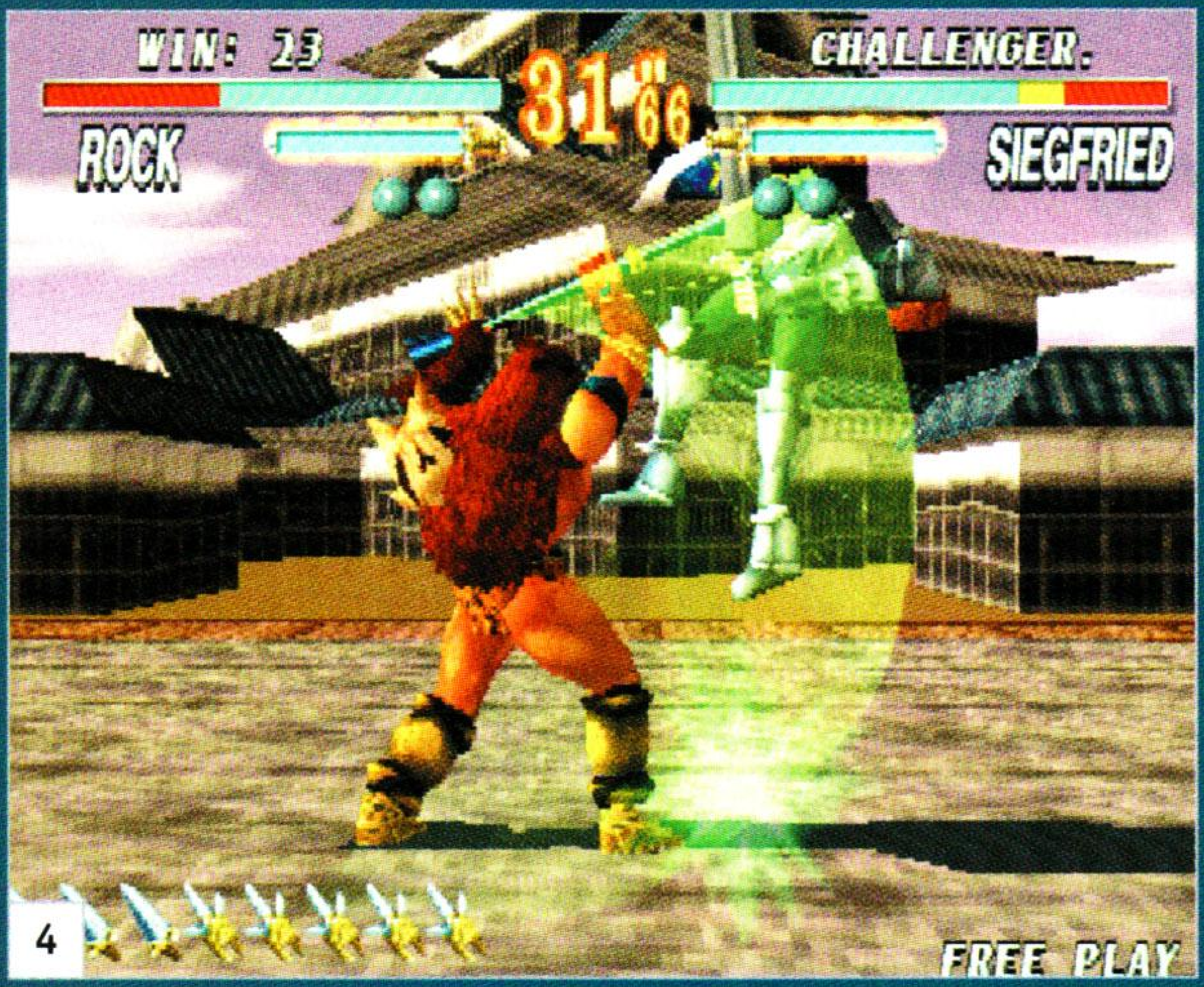
3. Cyclone Axe

Since Rock is such a large fellow and his axe has such tremendous range, the poor chap is a bit of an ass at close range. However, his long and medium range strikes are excellent - the Cyclone Axe being a case in point. This strike can even hit when Rock is about a third of the screen away from his foe.


01 10
CHALLENGER.
ROCK
SIEGFRIED

4. Axe Volcano

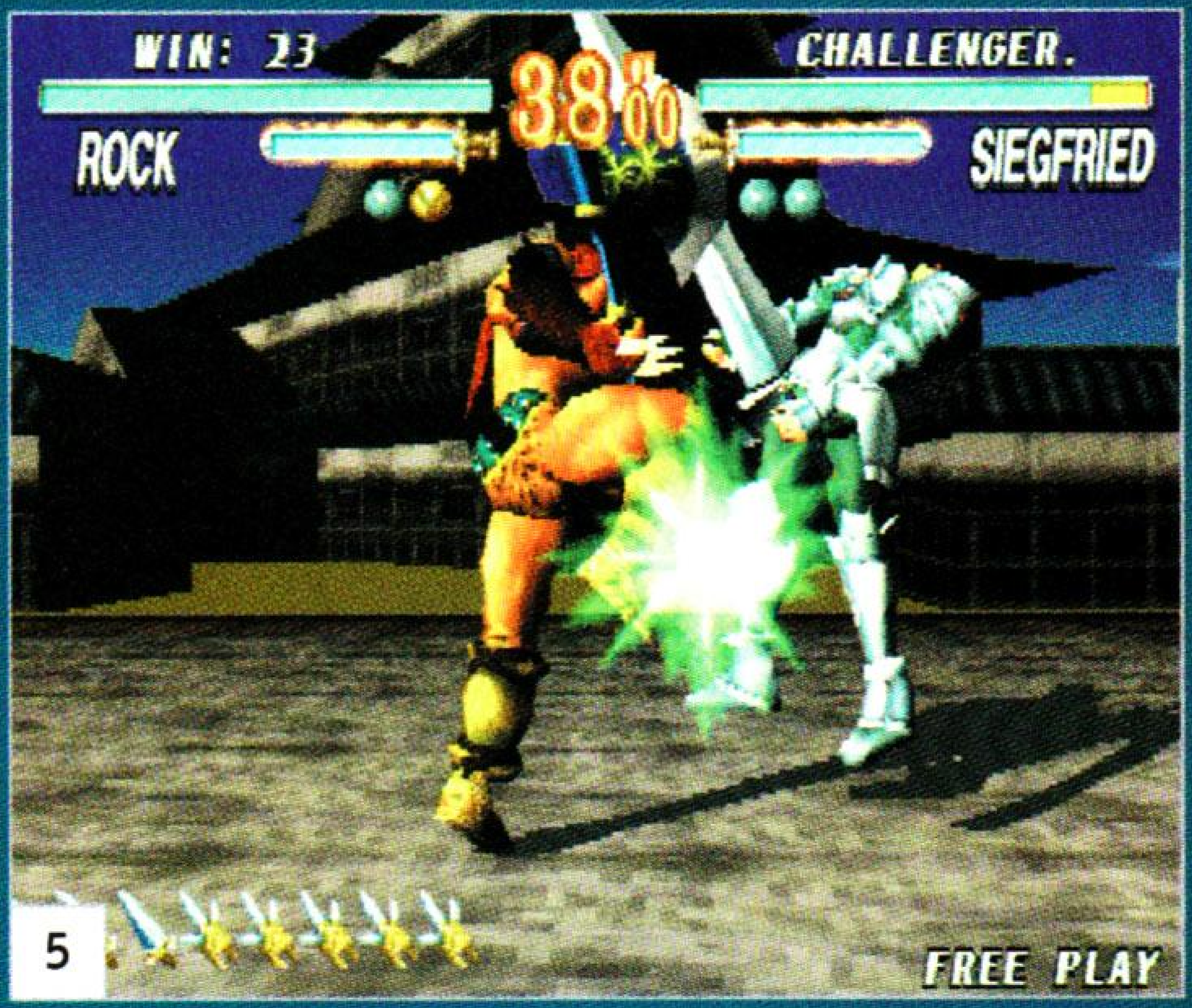
It hasn't been discerned yet whether Soul Edge has the lastability of Tekken in terms of floating combination techniques. The Axe Volcano sends an opponent into the air and can be combined with a low attack as they descend, but it appears that Tekken's combo versatility doesn't appear to be quite as pronounced in Soul Edge. That aside the Axe Volcano is easy to produce and should Soul Edge develop aeriel attack strategies, this is the nearest thing Rock has to a ‘Dragon Punch’ style technique. Worth using.


WIN: 23
31 66
CHALLENGER.
ROCK
SIEGFRIED
FREE PLAY

4

5. Rock Knee

Knee attacks are a staple floating technique in Virtua Fighter and Rock ha a very similar attack. However, its use isn't quite so pronounced. The Rock Knee doesn't float foes at all. Indeed, its lack of power and range makes it one of the less interesting techniques in Rock's arsenal. However, most of Rock's attacks hit best from long range so the Rock Knee is probably his best close range attack. A more honourable effort than a simple throw.


WIN: 23
38 00
CHALLENGER.
ROCK
SIEGFRIED
FREE PLAY

5

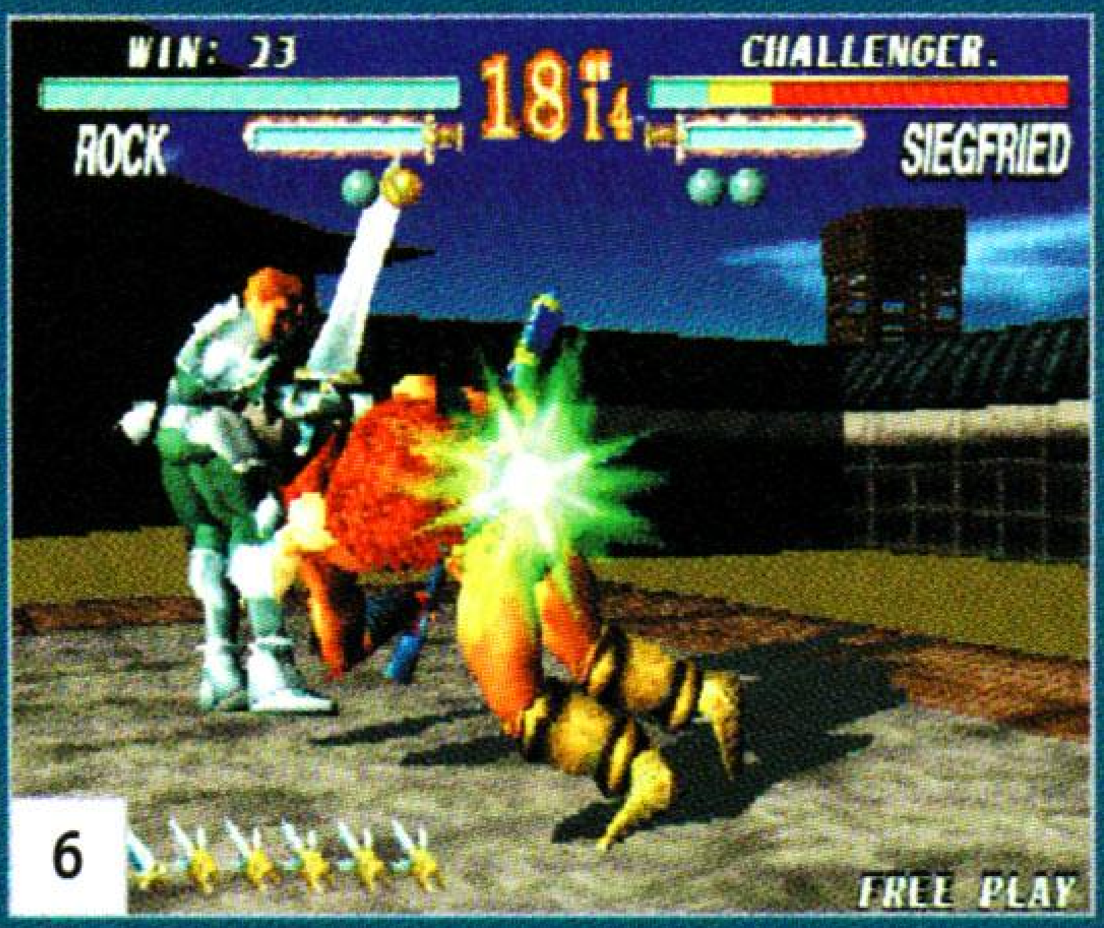
6. Shoulder Tackle

Even Rock's non-weapon orientated moves are pretty special as the Shoulder Tackle proves. Perform this move from a reasonable distance and you should score a valuable knock-down. This manages to hit on the mid-level.

7. Tornado Axe

As expected, this move has a great deal in common with the similarly monikered Typhoon Axe. However, the significant difference is the fact that this attack becomes a low-level strike on the third hit sending your opponent flying. This means that you have a choice of combinations open to you that could prove decisive in confusing the opponent and draining valuable energy.

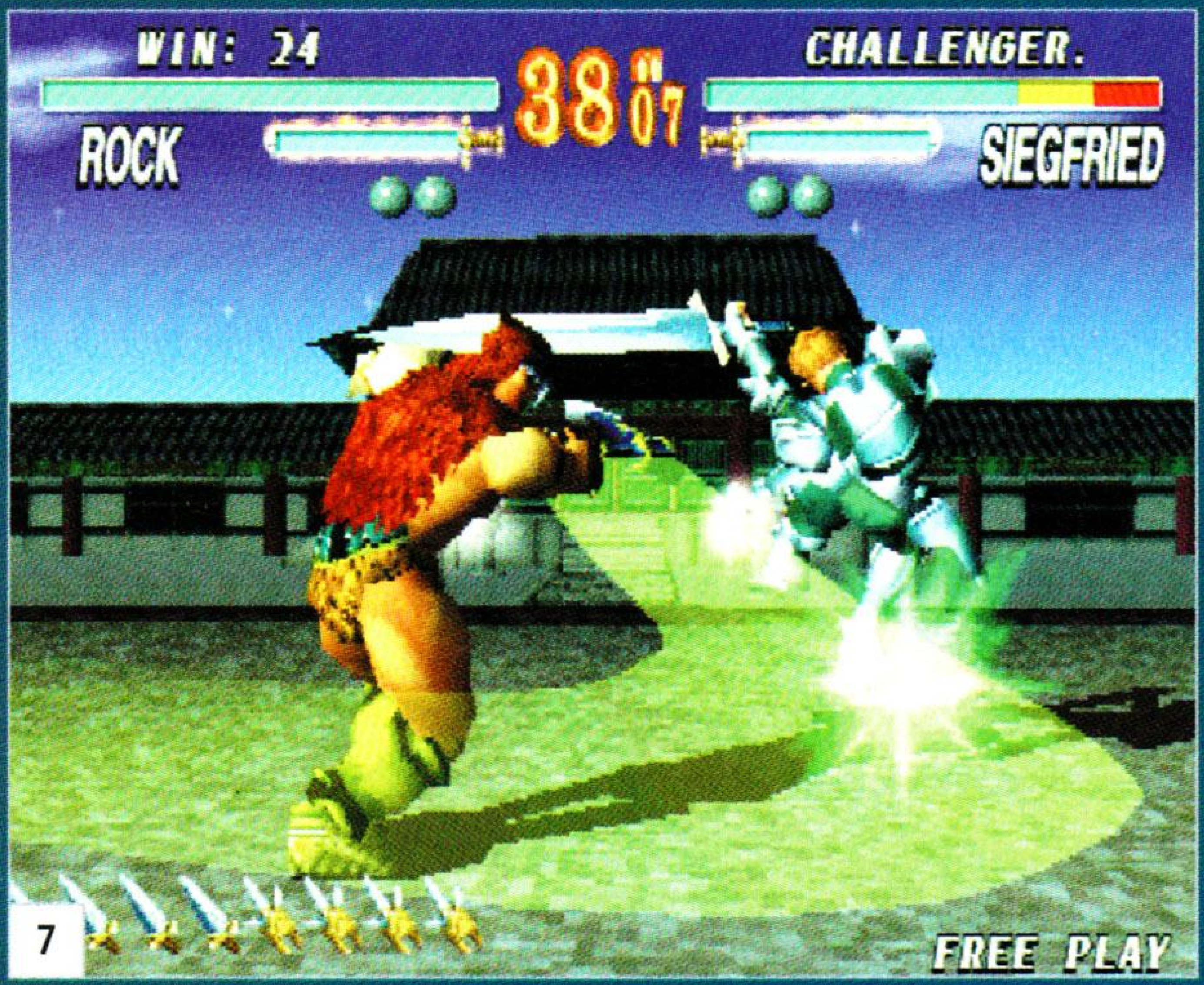
The Axe Volcano (above) sends opponents flying into the air, allowing Rock small follow-up potential. The Shoulder Tackle (right) is a good mid-level strike.


WIN: 23
18 14
CHALLENGER.
ROCK
SIEGFRIED
FREE PLAY

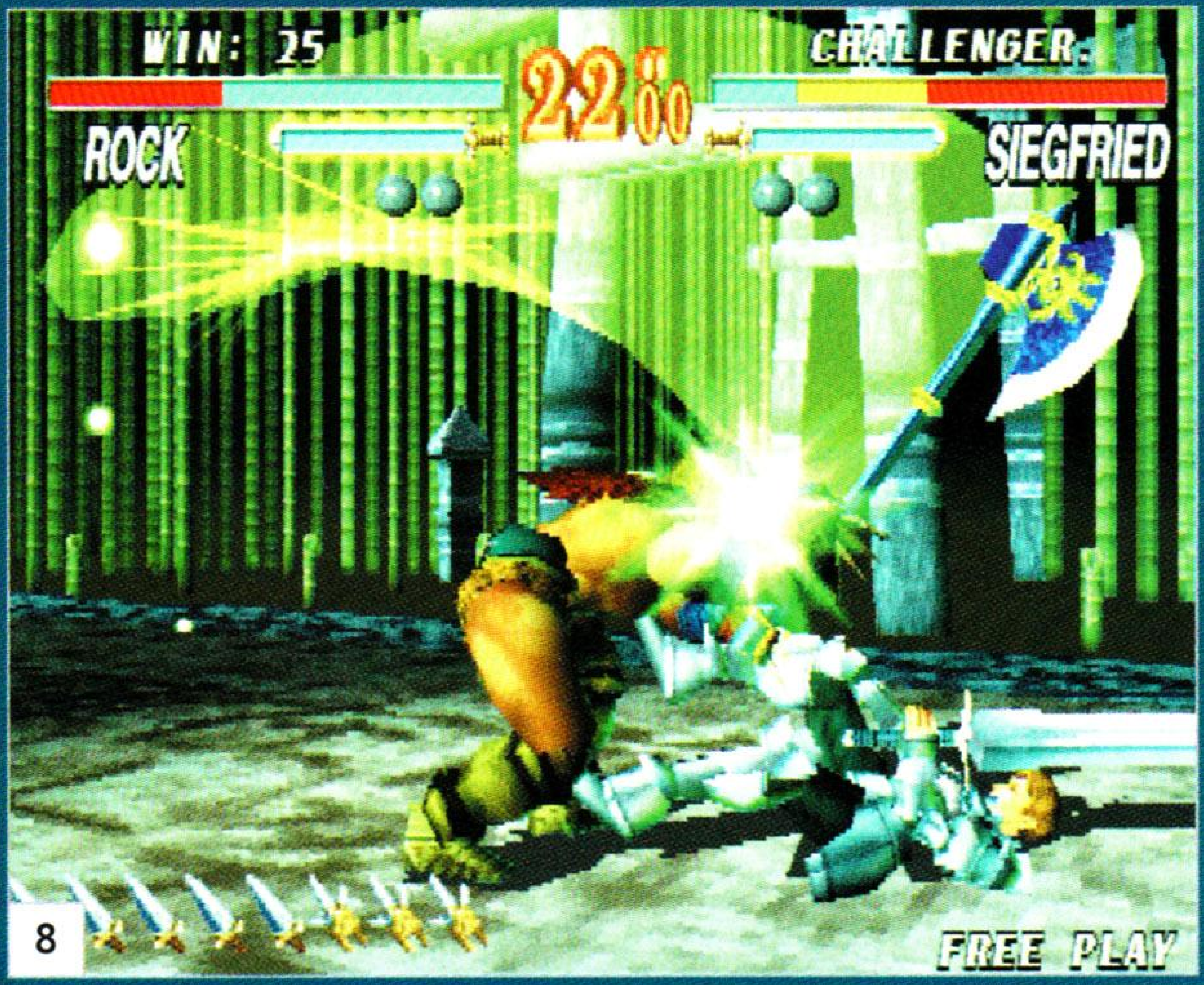
6

[1]The ‘White Giant’ Roams the Continents for the Soul Edge!

[2]Shipwrecked and Left for Dead by the Dreaded Pirate Captain Cervantes!


WIN: 24
38 07
CHALLENGER.
ROCK
SIEGFRIED
FREE PLAY

7


WIN: 25
22 00
CHALLENGER.
ROCK
SIEGFRIED
FREE PLAY

8

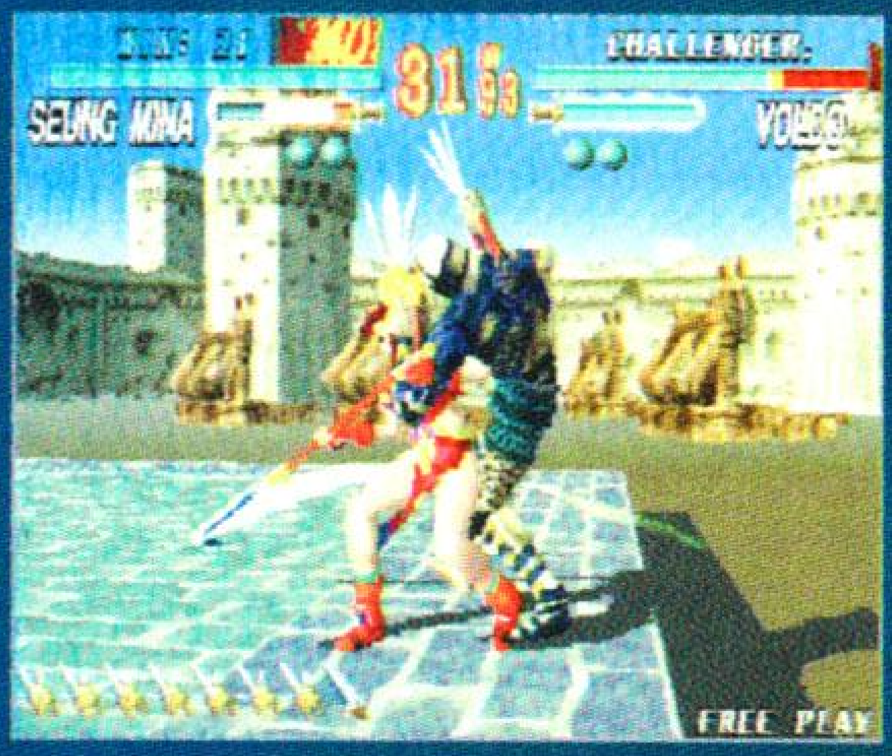
8. Tornado Spike

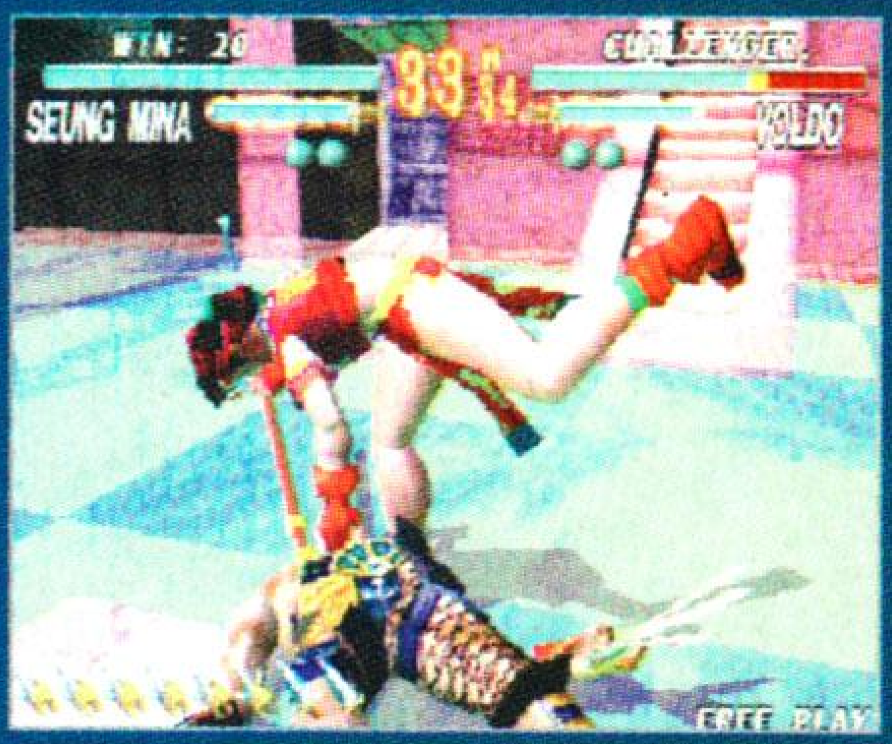
A two-pronged attack from Rock here, starting off with a useful mid-level strike and moving straight into a lower swipe. It's pretty easy for the opponent to avoid the second hit even if the first connects, so it could be more useful to feint with the first part of the move and go for the second part connecting, which results in a knock-down.

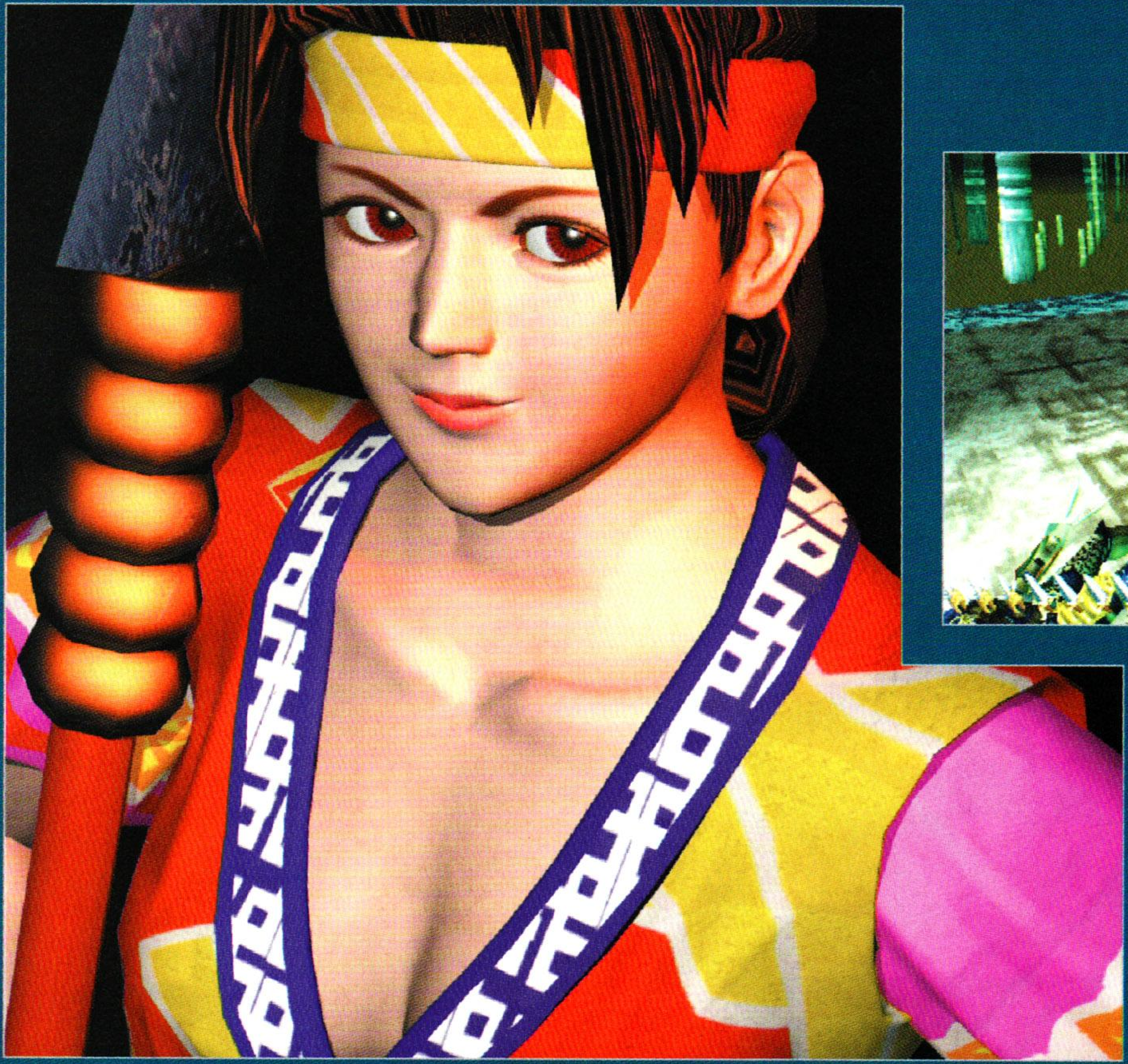
SEUNG MINA

HEART AND SOUL GIRL

Two examples of throwing motions performed by Seung Mina - different techniques are used when she loses her weaponry.







REPLAY
FREE PLAY

Full Name Seung Mina
Age 16, born November 3
Height 5'3" (159cm)
Weight 46kg
Blood Type A
Family Sueng Han Myong (father), mother and brother deceased
Weaponry The Zan-ma sword, inherited from her ancestors
Discipline The art of the Seung dynasty Great Sword
Stage Historic old temple in town

"THE SOUL EDGE SWORD WILL SAVE MY HOMELAND! I MUST FIND IT!"

DESPITE HER years, Seung Mina is still viewed as a child by her father. However, she grew up surrounded by swords and weaponry of different descriptions and over the years has established formidable skills which even eclipse her father's. Foremost in her repertoire of capabilities is her Zen-Ma swordplay. So, despite her being bullied by her peers, it was often the boys who went home crying.

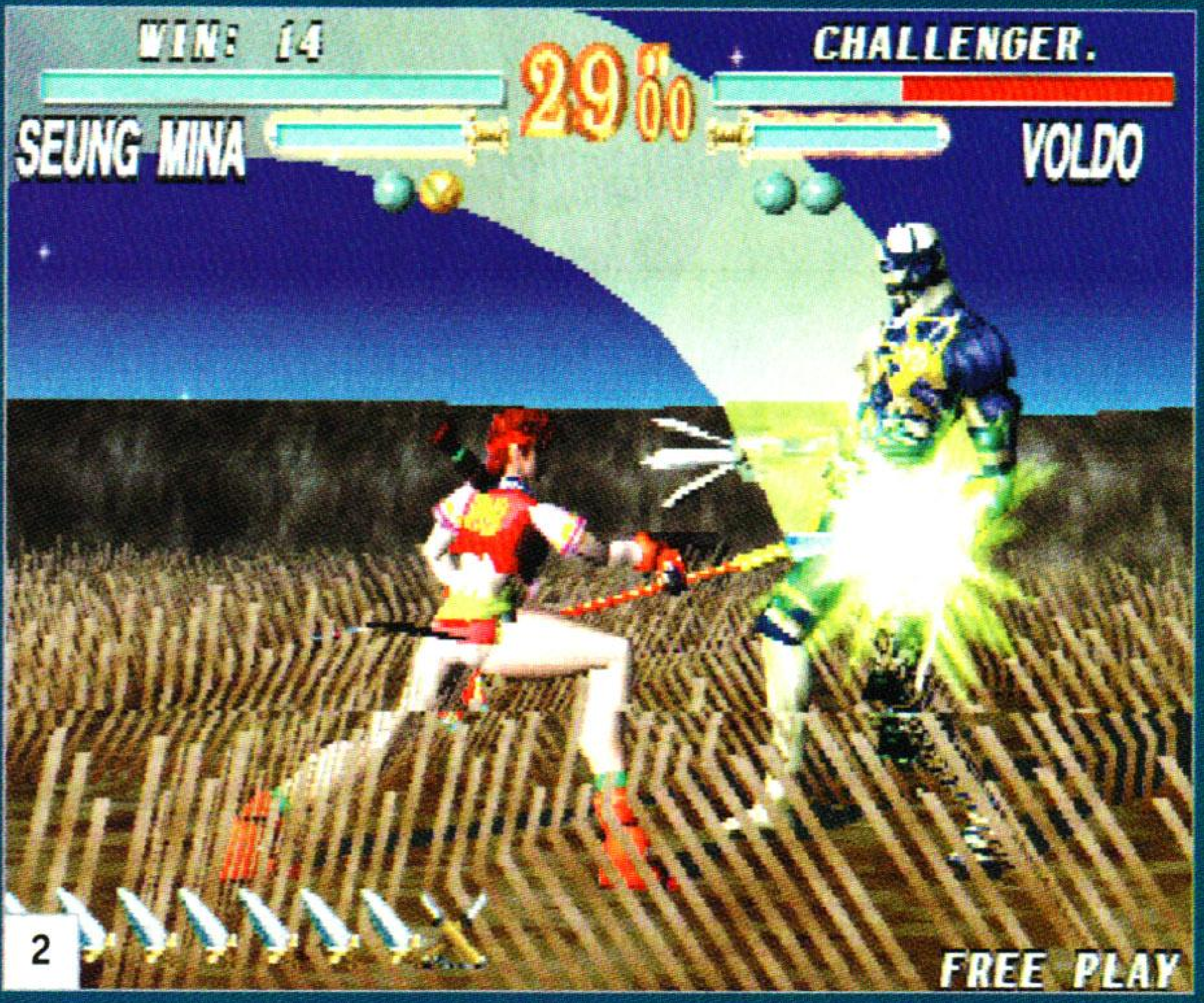
Her father attempted to keep her out of harm's way, but the growing political instability ensured that she was caught up in the war - history would not overlook her skill. Hearing the legends of the Soul Edge - the so-called sword of salvation, Seung Mina decided to join the search for the mystical blade, hoping that its powers would be able to return her beloved homeland to the peace and tranquility it used to have. Adding a twist to her particular tale, it turns out that the master pupil of Seung's school, Hwang Sung Kyung is also questing for the Soul Edge. Who will get there first?

1. Linked Fang Violent Wind Blade

This attack is very similar indeed to the triple-hit combination attacks seen with the other characters in Soul Edge. The difference here is that on the odd occasion, the combination seems to evolve into something far more impressive. Obviously, there is some scope for linking different attacks here and **MAXIMUM** is sure that Namco will release the appropriate information further on into Soul Edge's life-span. However, the basic combination as it is chains the first two hits, whilst the third can be blocked and countered if you are particularly unfortunate.

2. Back Roll Attack Blade

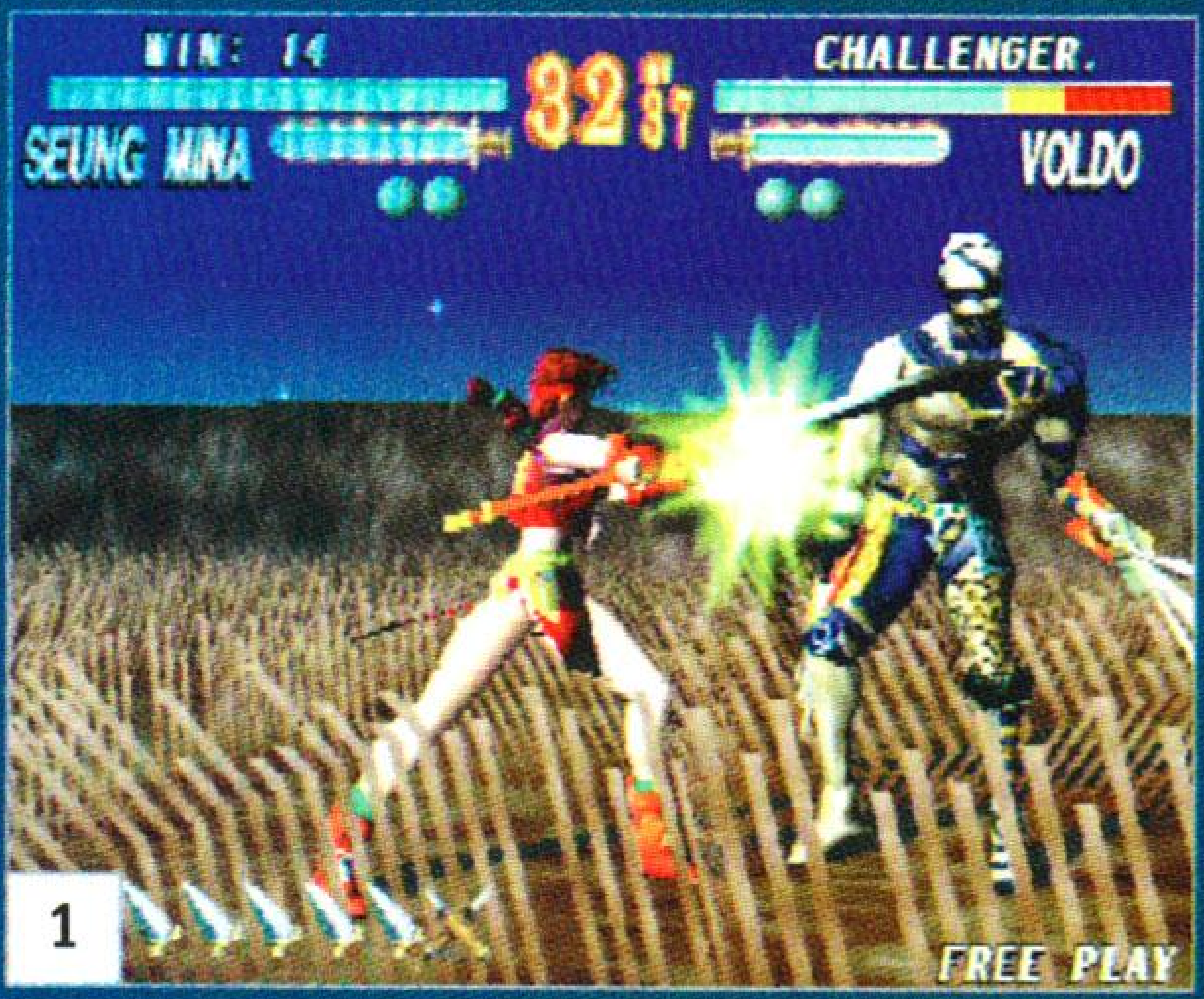
Again, this remains very similar to the other three-hit, single button combinations seen in Soul Edge. The distinctive two attack initiative, followed by a very slow third hit (which can be guarded) is again in evidence. This B, B, B attack chain can chain all three together effortlessly and is a good combo to use. Probably preferable to the Linked Fang Violent Wind Blade attack.



2

Seung Mina delivers a devastating vertical blow to the nonplussed Voldo in a fight taking place on one of the most graphically pleasing stages.

WIN: 16
CHALLENGER.
SEUNG MINA
VOLDO
SEUNG MINA WINS
FREE PLAY



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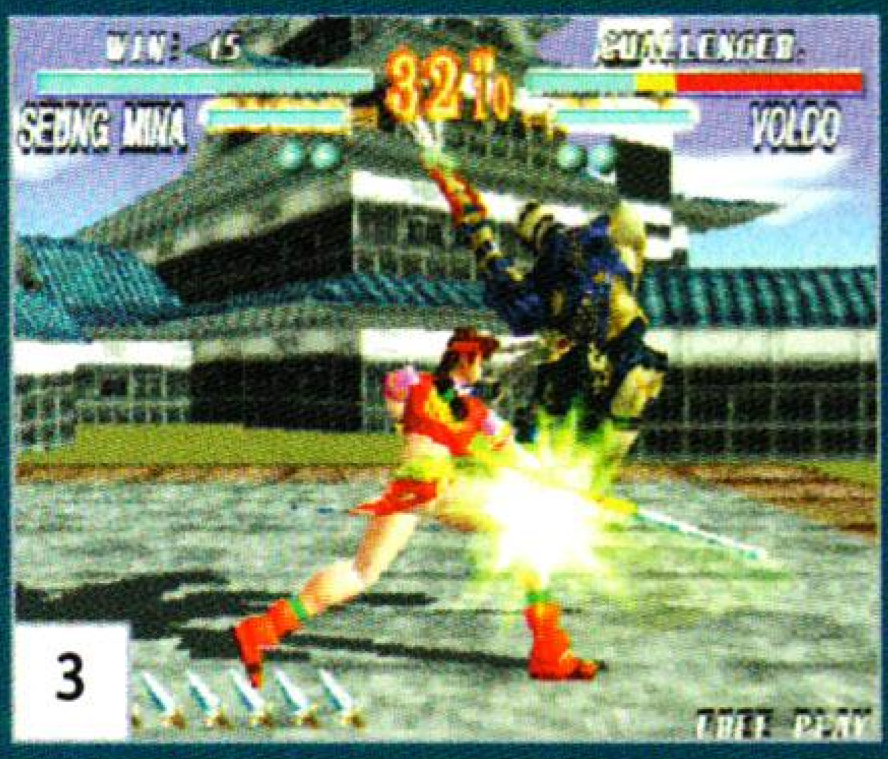
SOUL EDGE

KOREAN MARTIAL ARTIST OF THE SEUNG SCHOOL



The low-level final hit of the Hidden Fang Attack Blade in action - use this move in combination with the Back Roll Attack Blade to confound your foes!

3. HIDDEN FANG ATTACK BLADE

This is best described as a variation on the Back Roll Attack Blade. The combination is identical up until the third hit, which takes the form of a low-level thrusting towards the feet of Seung Mina's foe. The final down cut knocks the opponent off their feet, making it quite useful. Activated with B, B and down and A, it's important to keep pressing down or you tend to pull off the first two hits of the Linked Fang Violent Wind Blade instead.

4. SPIRAL FORCES CRUSHING CEREMONY

This is a devastating thrusting motion with Seung pushing forward behind her sword with incredible power. Its peculiar movements make it a good gambit against a moving opponent. This move, activated by pressing A and B together, hits at the mid-level. This move sends the opponent reeling, so it may be a good move to follow up with one of the usual triple-button press combination attacks.

5. SEVERING VIOLENT DESTRUCTION CEREMONY

One of the most superlative combination strikes in the game, really showing off the true power of this most impressive character. For opponents of Seung Mina, it's worth nothing that the first hits are easily avoided, which can be a good opportunity to counter. It's unclear as to whether she is vulnerable if the opponent blocks the first technique, but again, this really shows off the motion capture and the speed blur movements used in Soul Edge.

6. CIRCULAR SWORD DANCE CEREMONY

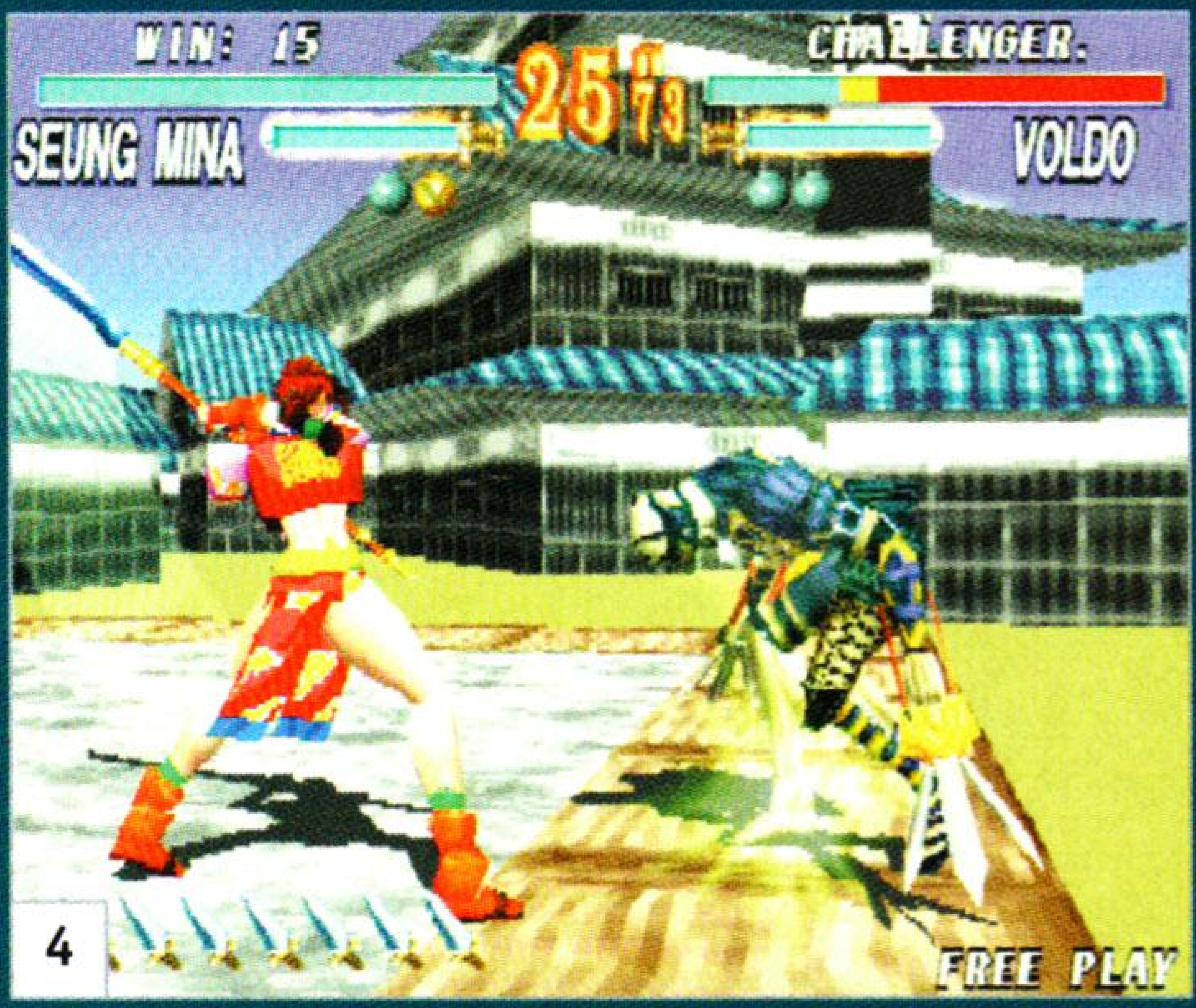
Another excellent attack. Gripping her Zanba sword, she thrusts it into the ground and uses it for support as she swings around and kicks at her opponent. Quite a clumsy move in terms of speed and recovery, but an unexpected technique nonetheless. It also shows off Seung Mina's more flashy moves quite effectively. A great move, but not exactly useful.

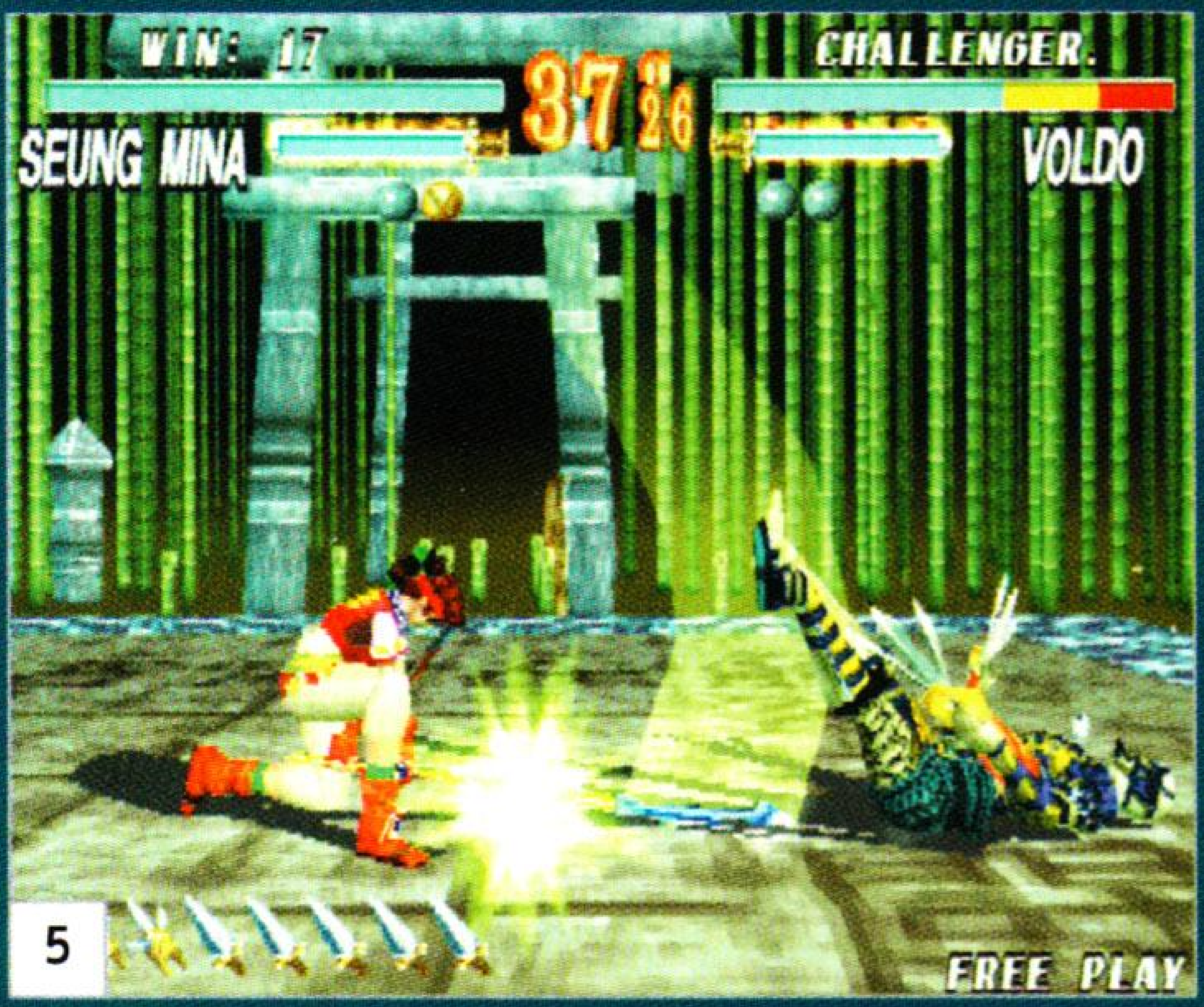
7. TURNING KICK

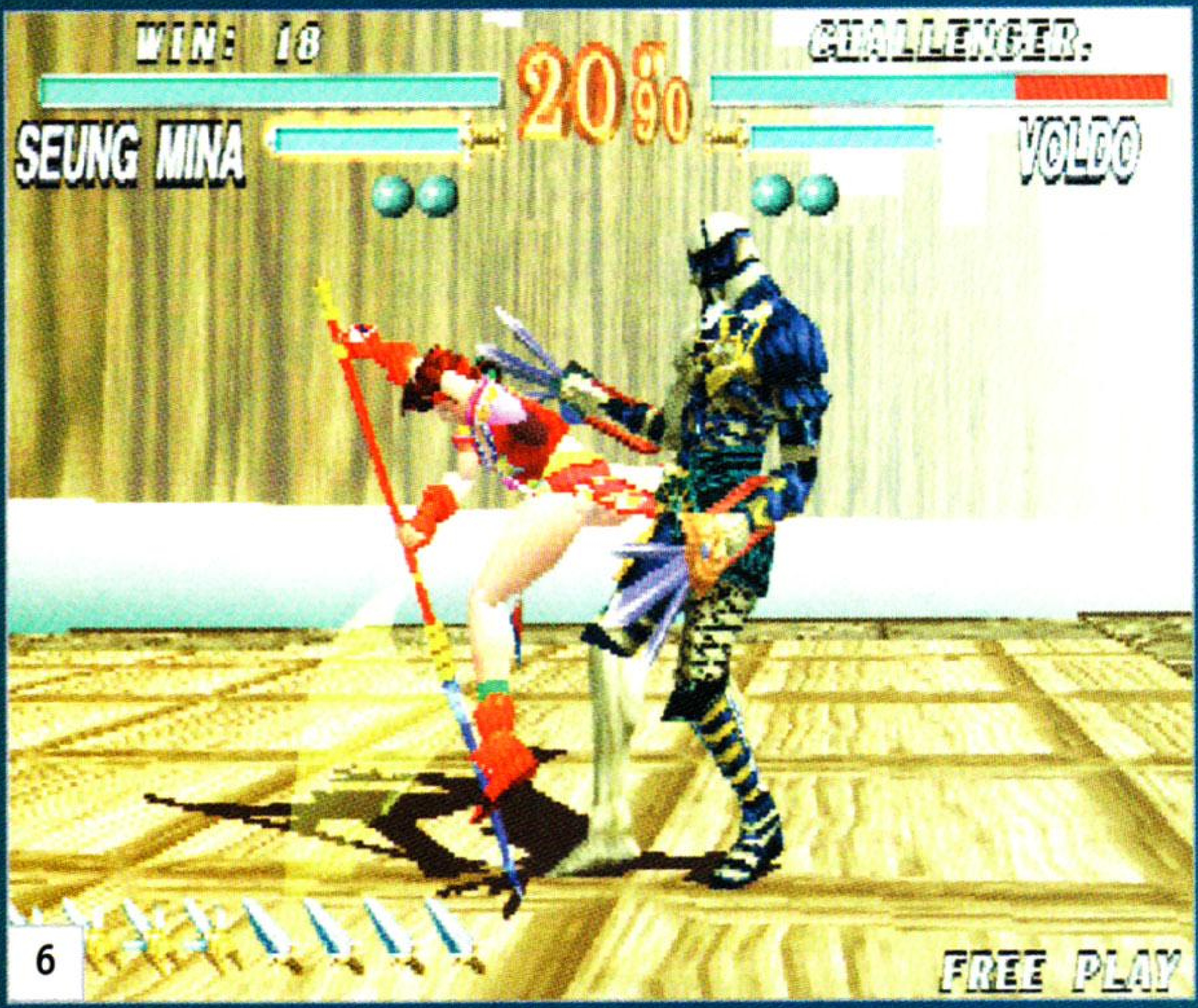
Although called the turning kick, this is more of a jump followed by a side kick, resulting in some considerable forward movement. This move repeats up to a maximum of three times, although this may quite clumsy to pull off with the joystick as the movement to activate it is forward twice with the kick button.

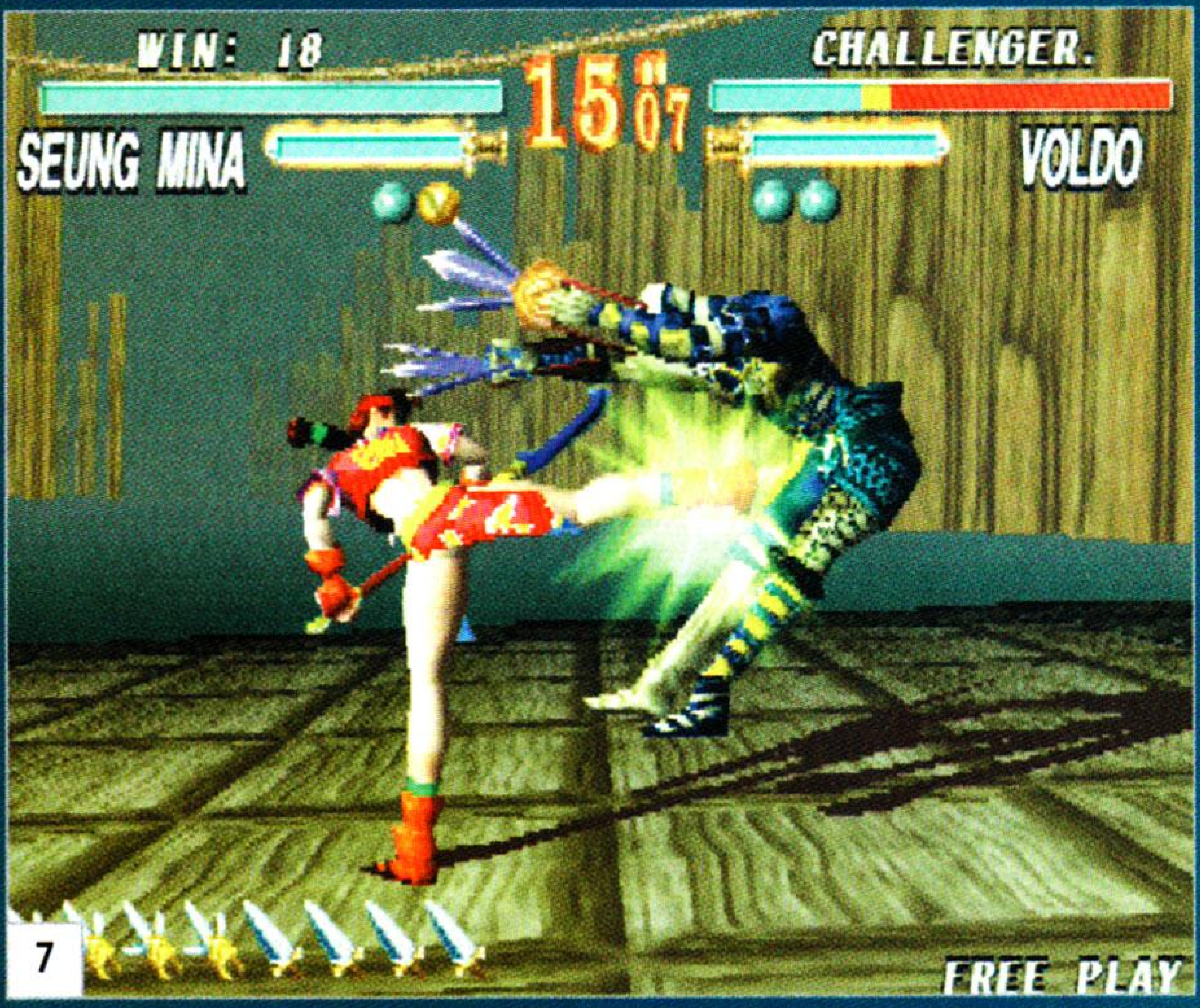
8. BINDING KICK

This is perhaps best used as a distance attack as her spinning and lunging movement results in quite a fair degree of forward movement as Seung Mina thrusts towards her opponent.









[1]TAUGHT THE SKILLS OF THE HEREDITARY ZHAN-MA-DOA AT SEUNG'S SCHOOL OF LONG BLEADEN!

[2]DENIED ENTRANCE INTO THE COASTAL DEFENSE FORCE BY ADMIRAL LEE SUN SIN!

[3]FIND THE SOUL EDGE AND SAVE THE HOMELAND!

Three pictures showing the incredible Seung Mina in action. The Binding Kick (right) enables her to strike from a distance to devastating effect.

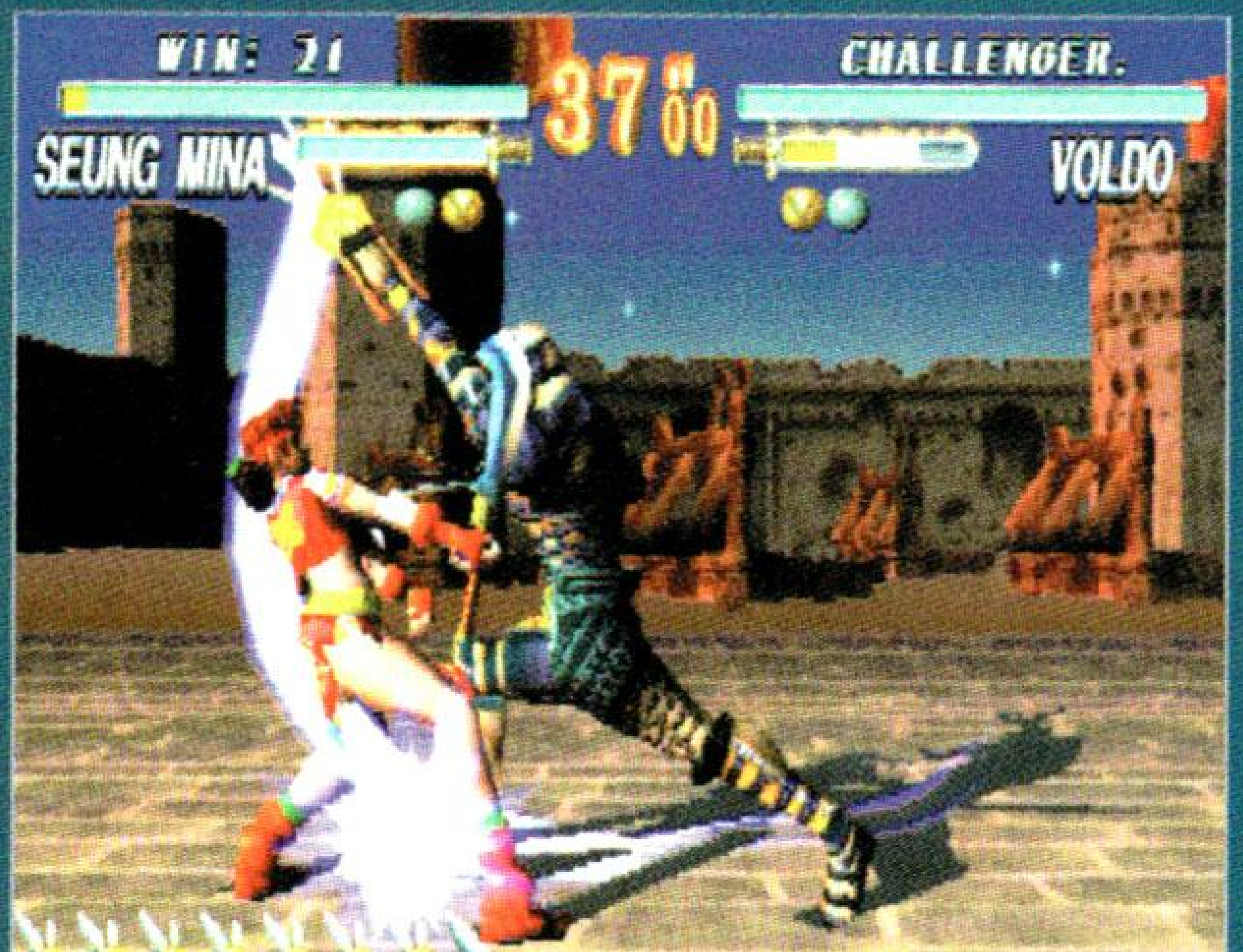
SEUNG MINA
VOLDO
8

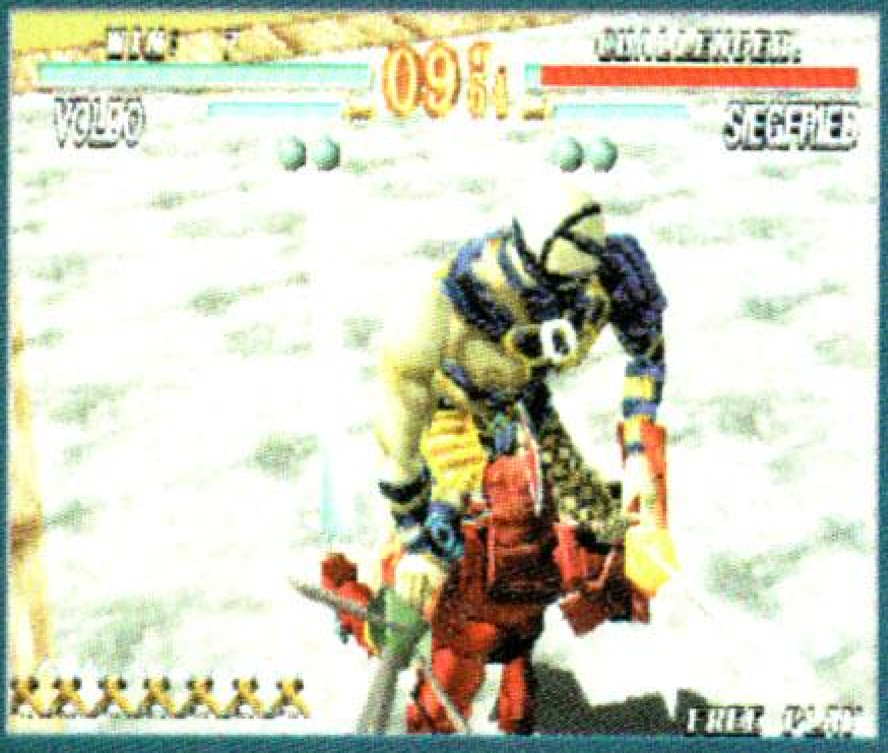
SEUNG MINA
VOLDO

CHALLENGER.
SEUNG MINA
VOLDO
FREE PLAY

VOLDO

THE LAST LUNATIC! ROYAL SUBJECT IMPRISONED IN THE PIT!





The Crab Throw (immediately above) plus Voldo's spectacular all-three-button super move (top picture).

WIN: 10
23 00
CHALLENGER.
VOLDO
SIEGFRIED
FREE PLAY

Full Name Voldo
Age 43, born August 25
Height 6'0" (183cm)
Weight 176 pounds
Blood Type A
Family Four brothers killed in the war
Weaponry 'Katar' hand-mounted blades
Discipline Freestyle
Stage Money Pit

"TRUST ME, SIGNOR VERCCI... I SHALL DELIVER THE SOUL EDGE!"

THE POWERFUL merchant Vercci virtually controlled Italy's commerce but sought power beyond all comprehension in the form of the Soul Edge blade. Many of his cronies attempted to track down the sword but it all came to nothing - every lead just took Vercci's men further away from the true location of the sword. In the end, he took himself and a great deal of his treasures across the oceans in search of the blade. With him was a young retainer called Voldo. Attacked from all sides, Vercci hit land, dug a huge pit and buried the treasure and Voldo with it. Surviving for years, Voldo went totally mad and mercilessly killed all-comers to the pit in a frenzy of bloodlust. Realising after many years that Vercci had died. Voldo decided to quest for the Soul Edge himself, hoping that the sword's power could restore the life and fortunes of his master.

One of the more exciting characters in Soul Edge Voldo is a bizarre armour-clad being armed with triple-blades (Katar) emanating from his hands. His techniques are unpredictable, but always deadly, making him an excellent fighter to learn. Adding to this unpredictability is the sheer wealth of flowing combination attacks in his repertoire - the moves list here is only the beginning of this enigmatic character's capabilities. It is recommended that you use these techniques as a base and experiment further once you have mastered them.

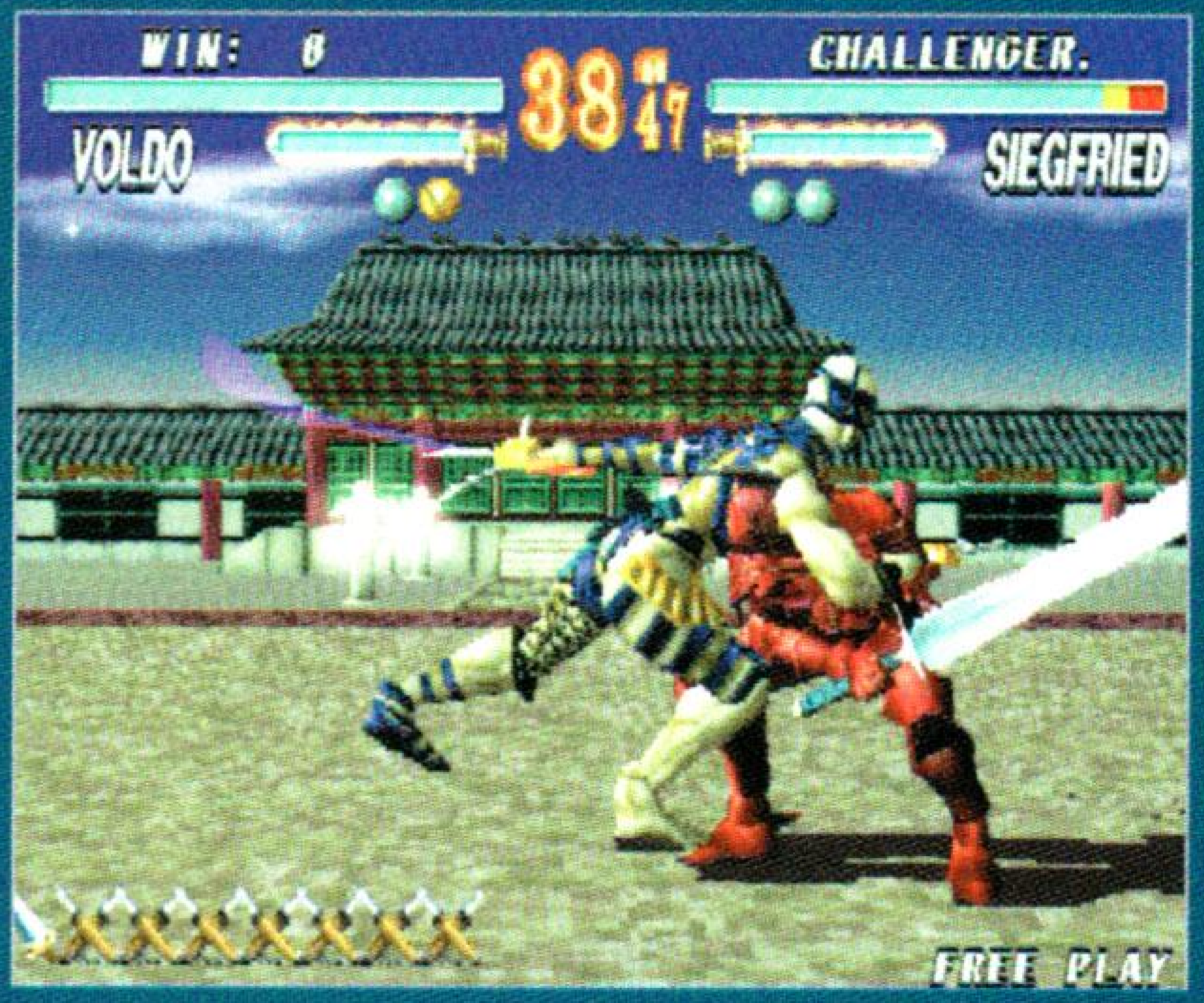
1. STAMPEDE SHREDDER

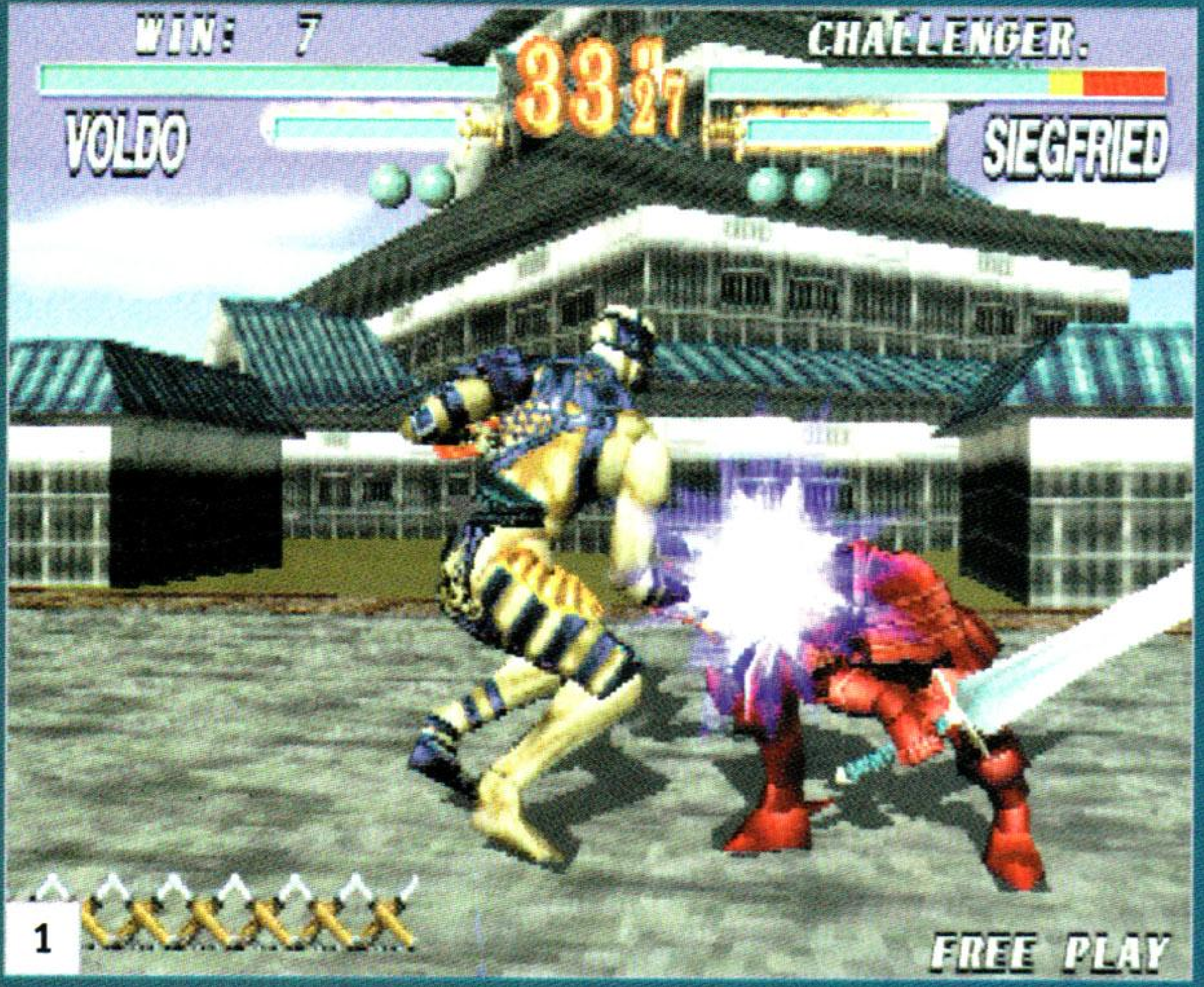
The first of Voldo's sure-fire killing techniques is the Stampede Shredder, which Tekken players might recognise as bearing a marked similarity to Jack's Hammer Combo from Tekken. It can hit up to five times if used properly, although the opponent may be able to block it after as little as two successful strikes. A great counter-strike, it's worth noting that even if all hits connect, the opponent won't be downed.

2. MUTE SLASHER

A very useful combination attack to remember. The Mute Slasher is a three-hit combo that starts high and strikes at the mid-section before returning high again. The attack starts as a quick one, two and finishes with

This incredible combination is easy to execute and bears all the hallmarks of Voldo's mad style: unexpected and rather powerful.





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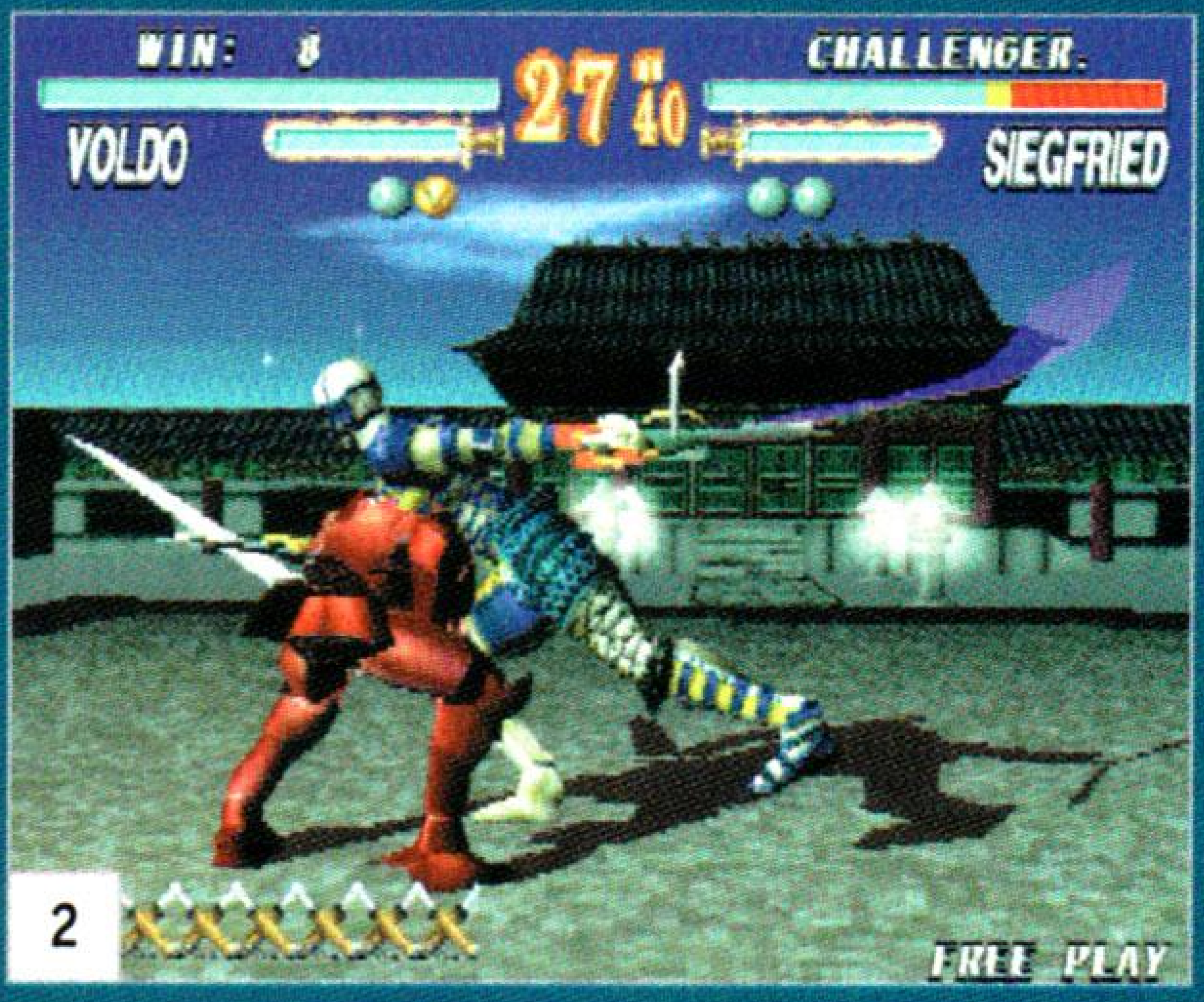
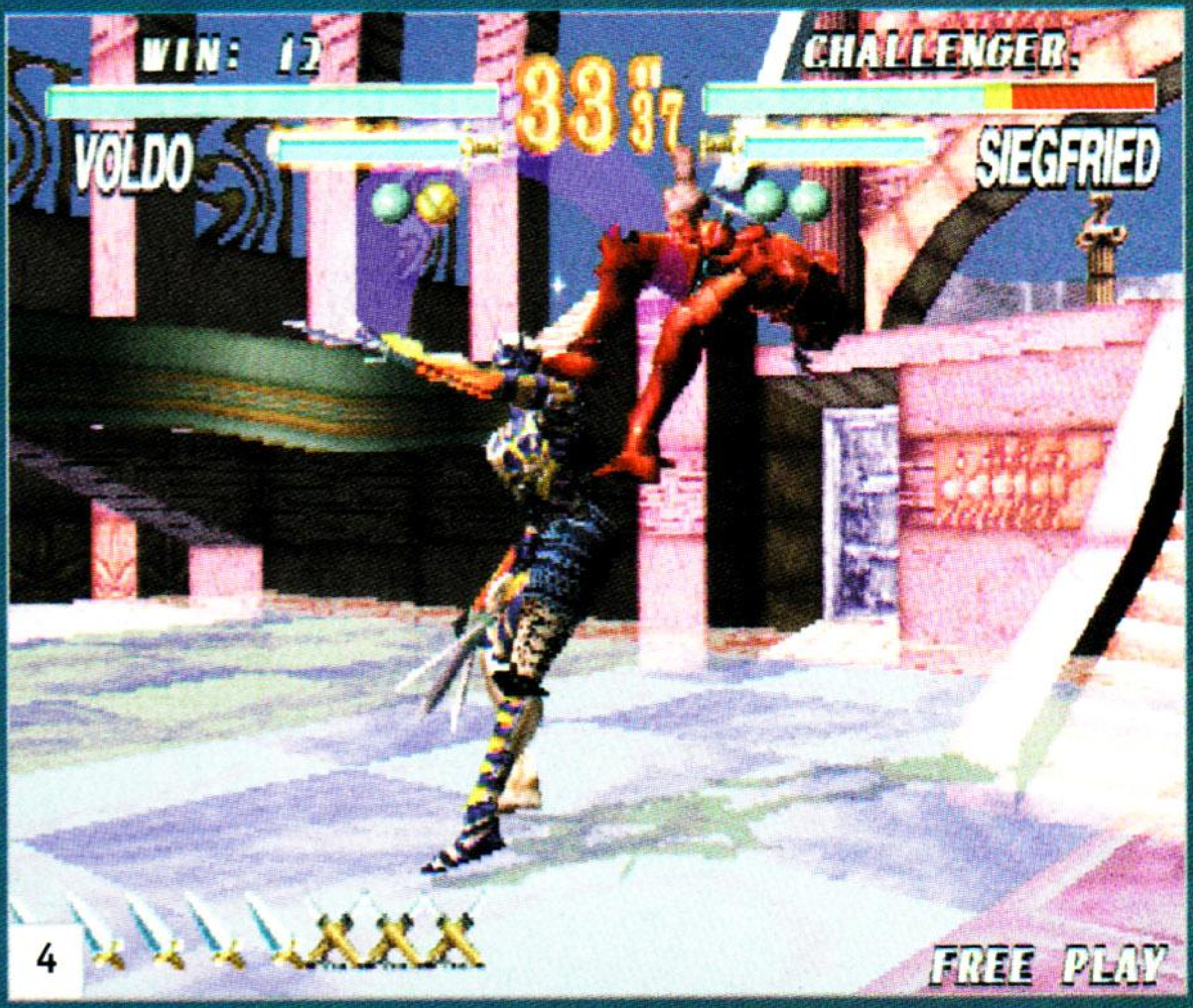


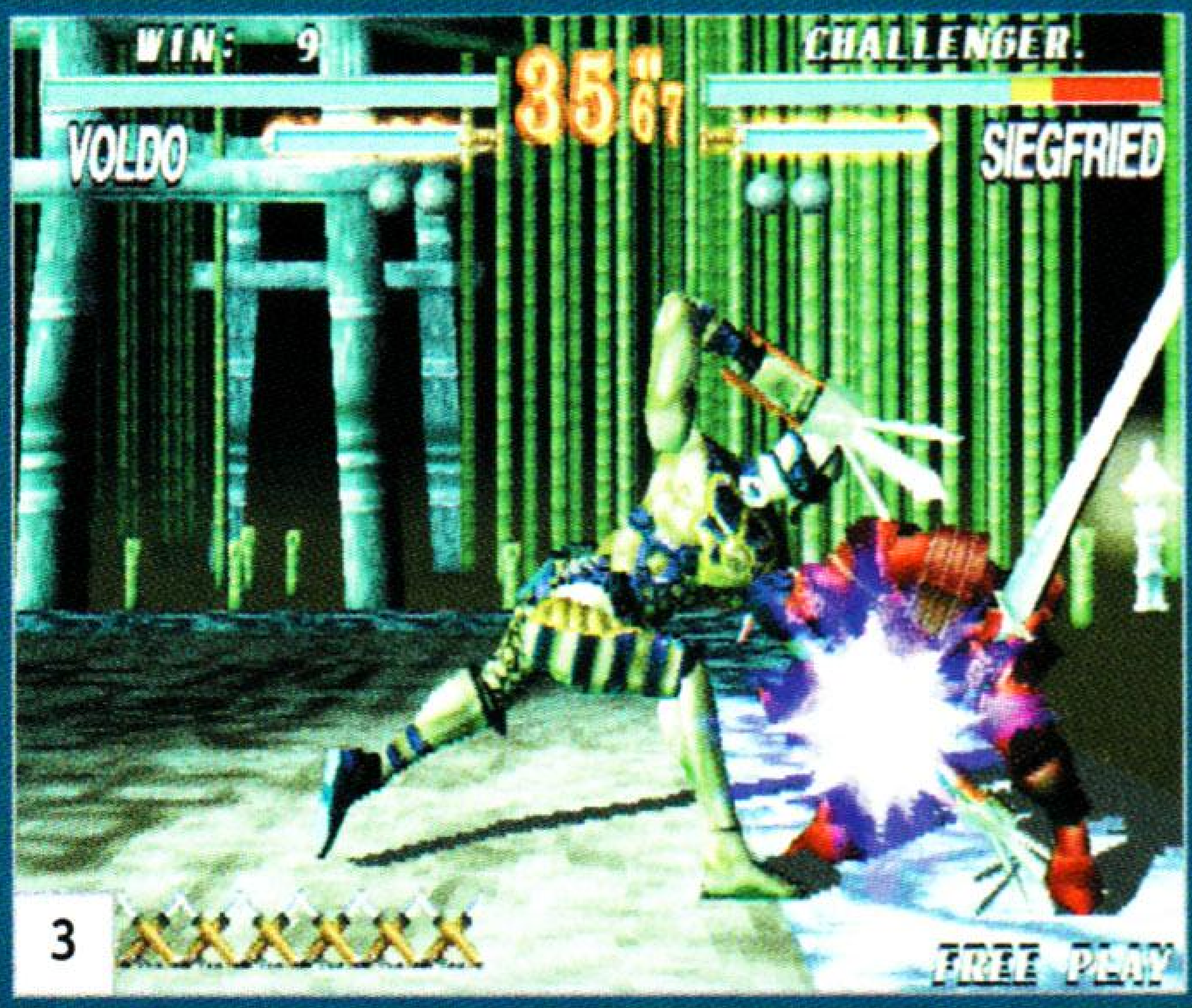
2

- SOUL EDGE ARTWORK © NAMCO 1995, 1996. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

THE MASTER OF COMBINATIONS LITERALLY SHREDS HIS FOES!

a low sweeping arc, the strongest of the three hits. The first move is quick, meaning it's a good counter-attack, although subsequent hits are more easily guarded against. A solid mid-level attack that can be easily over-used.





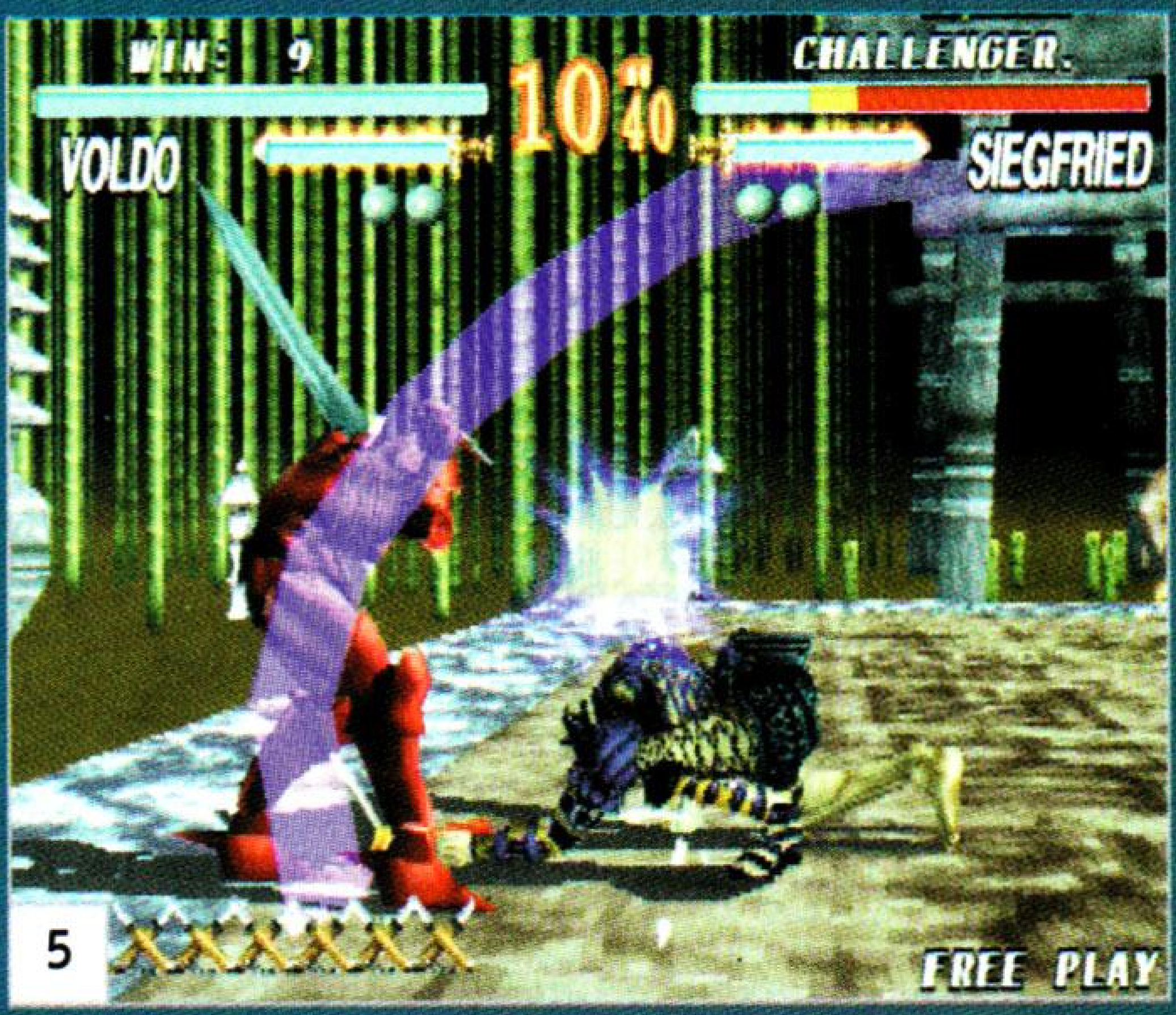
A dashing forward move, the Rat Chase technique scores several lower hits. Not bad at all...

3. RAT CHASE

The Rat Chase is one example of low-level combinations that Voldo has in his repertoire. There are many more, but this technique is the mother of them all. Rushing towards his opponent, Voldo makes several quick stabbing motions towards his foe's feet. As all hits strike at the lower level, it's a fairly valuable combination.

4. ECSTASY

One of Voldo's more spectacular feats is this particular move, which inflicts up to three hits and causes a fair degree of damage. Starting off with an upward swing (which shows off the "speed blur" system in Soul Edge magnificently), Voldo's foe is sent flying into the air, and further hits register as the opponent is falling back down towards the ground. After the first hit has registered, it may be worthwhile switching to other, more powerful techniques while he is in the air. This technique also has other uses. Because of the sheer power of the move, coupled with the long reach of Voldo's Katar blades, it often secures a ring out.



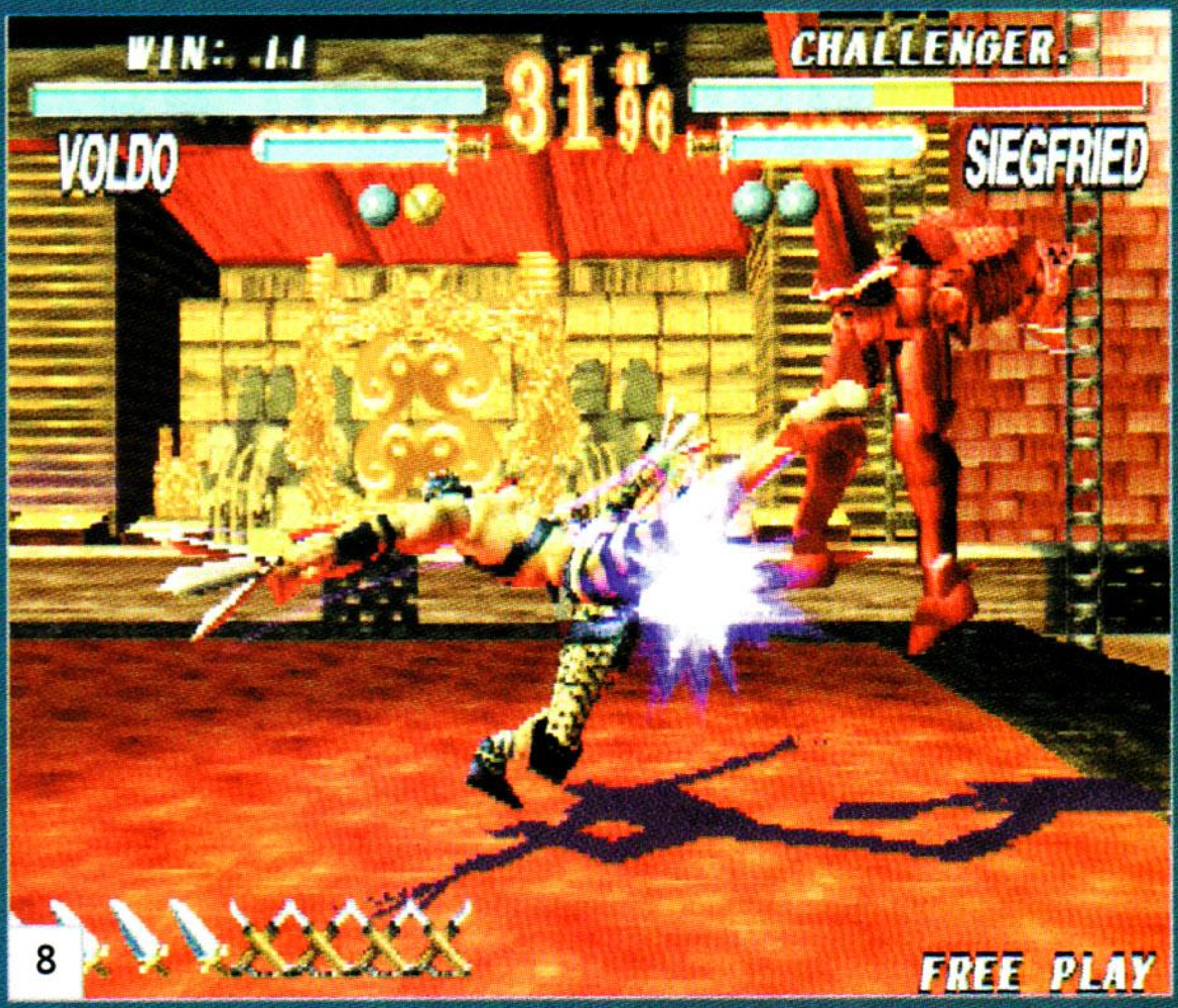
5. PREYING MANTIS

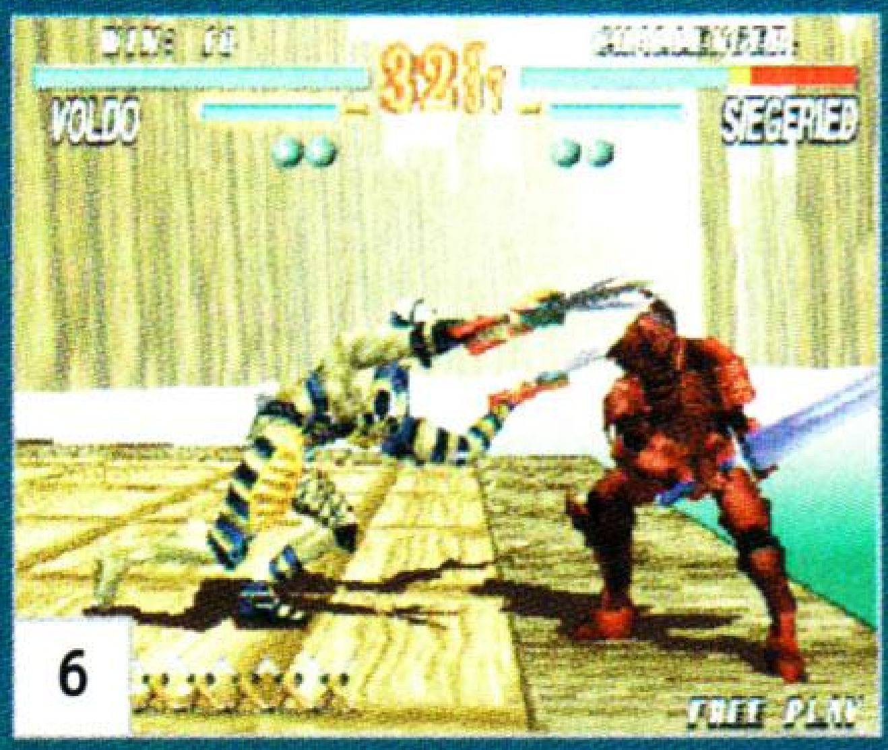
Swinging his blades up into the air, Voldo rushes forward and brings them down in a lethal movement. Although not so effective in a basic combat situation, the Preying Mantis technique is known to have some uses against opponents who are rising.

[1]BLINDED AND LONELY FROM HIS SERVICE IN THE STOREHOUSE!

[2]ROYAL SUBJECT BRINGS A BLOODY DEATH TO ANYONE WHO DEFILES THE 'MONEY PIT'!

[3]LEAVE THE ISLAND IN SEARCH OF THE SOUL EDGE, HIS MASTERS MOST PRIZED POSSESSION!



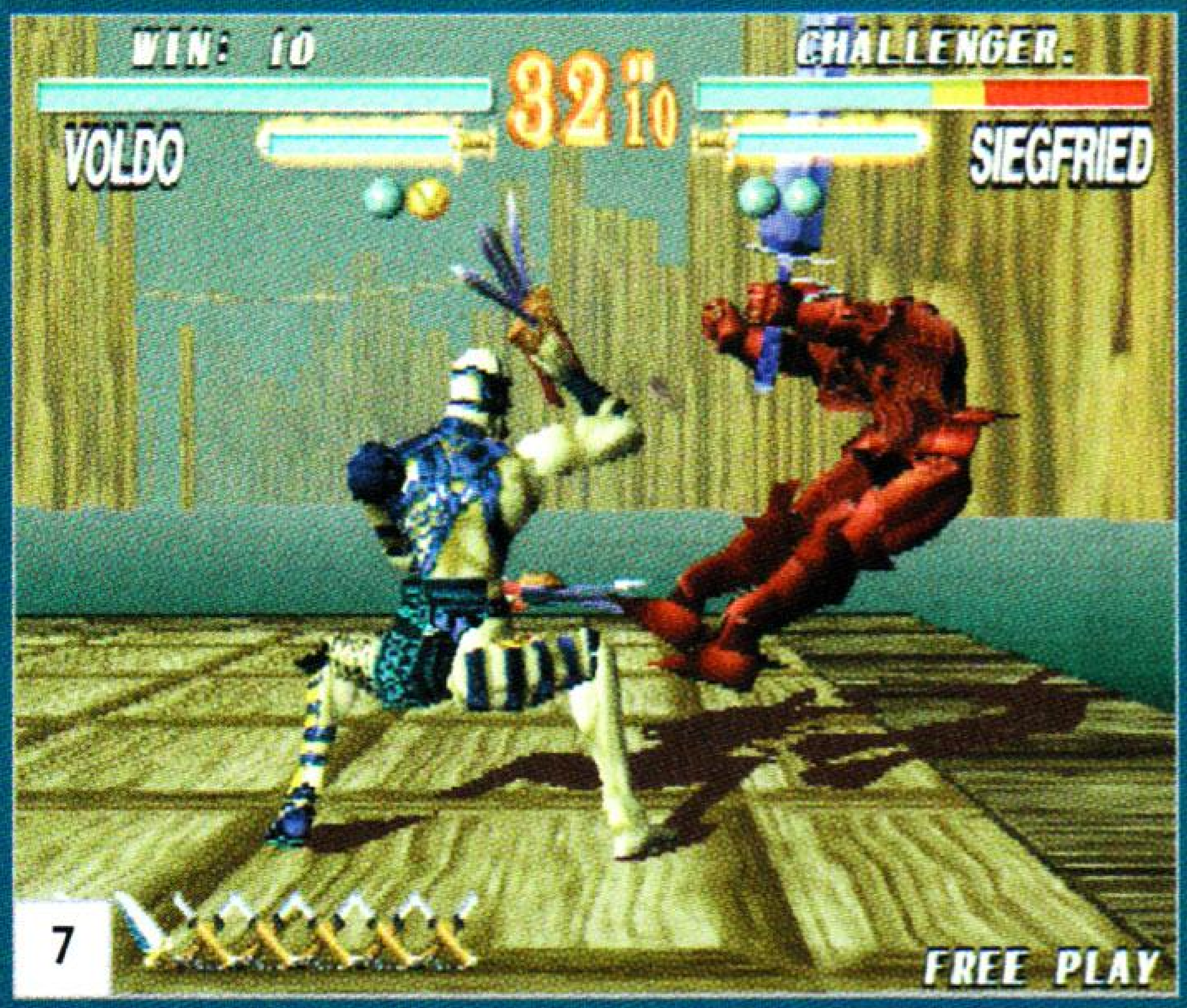


6. GATE OPEN

Thrusting out both Katar blades in front of him, Voldo aims to impale his opponents before moving his arms out in an outward arc (thus causing further injury). A good technique with deceptive range, which also downs the opponent.

7. DEMON ELBOW

This move, activated with forward twice followed by B is one of Voldo's better close-range techniques, comparable to Akira Yuki's Dashing Shoulder Charge in Virtua Fighter. Voldo's wide leg stance offers plenty of power, the move itself being one of his most spectacular close proximity manoeuvres. This is a great move to use as a counter after guarding an attack that has a great deal of recovery time.



8. DEATH ROSE

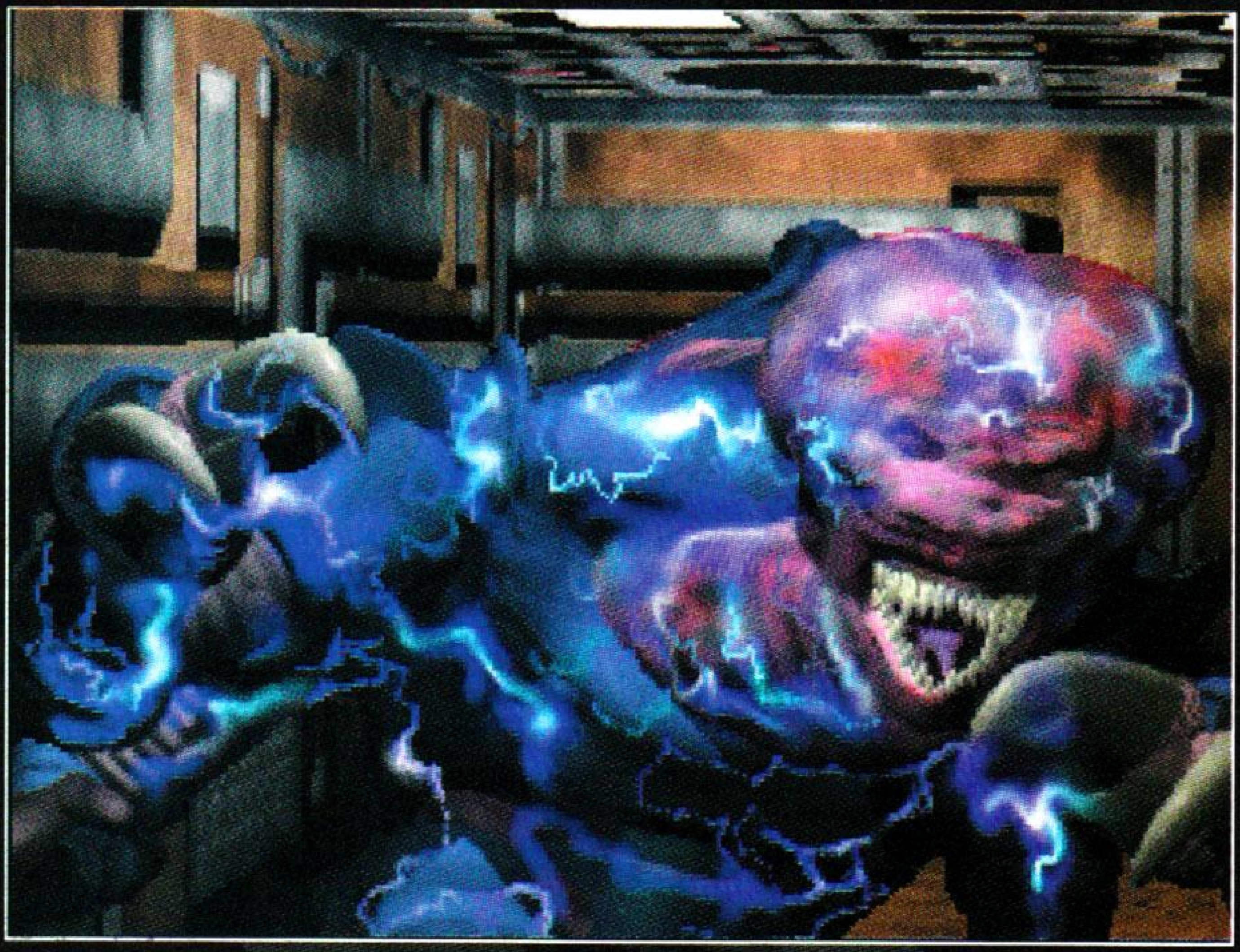
One of the most bizarre moves in Voldo's repertoire is the Death Rose, which involves him lashing out with his Katar whilst performing a kind of dancing spin. This results in a fair degree of forward movement and Voldo even performs a technique-specific "winning pose" at the end of the move. The poor aspects of this technique are pretty obvious. All of the hits connect at the easily-blocked upper level, and the potential for a counter-strike against Voldo when using this particular attack is enormous.

PC EA | 3DO MASTERPIECE COMES TO THE PC!
SPACE HULK
AVAILABLE ON PC IN MARCH AND MAY FOR CONSOLES

Cleanse and purge with SPACE HULK! Terrifying alien combat by Electronic Arts!

Available on PC CD-ROM and 3DO, with PlayStation and Saturn versions to follow!

By the 41st millennium, the whole of humanity had explored the furthest reaches of the galaxy from the home planet of Earth. Great power was invented to power star ships of unimaginable size and speed, with the ability to traverse dimensions due to a device known as the Warp Drive. The command of these explorations (and indeed the fate of humanity) rested in the hands of a frail being, but one with the most powerful psychic tendrils the galaxy had ever known; the Emperor. Confined to a life-giving chamber, the Emperor's unimaginable psychic spirit enabled him to live for millions of years in a constant cocoon-like state, watching over his humanity as they strove to reach the stars under his guidance. The omnipotence of the Emperor proved to be a great strength, and lead man to the furthest reaches of other dimensions, making them prosperous colonisers.



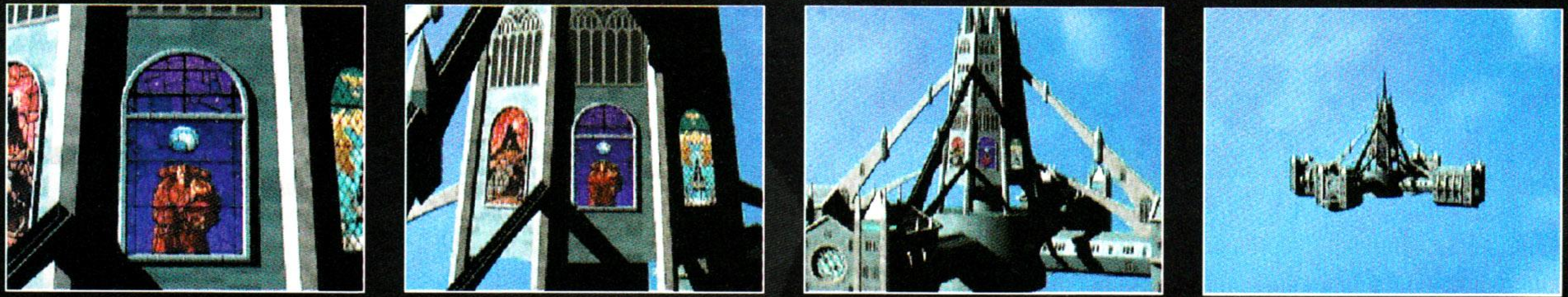
At the head of the Emperor's vast army are the specially devoted; the Legiones Astartes. These artificially-created Space Marines are bio-warriors specifically designed to combat the many threats posed to the Imperium from the newly discovered life forms. The immense struggle to combat these new entities fell to the Emperor's chosen troops, and they took to their ships to fly across the cosmos in search of the evil and impure. Various sub-divisions of the Imperium sprang up, from the lowly trooper of the Imperial guard and the sturdy Squat mechanic to the Space Marines themselves, the most honourable of which were entrusted with supremely difficult missions. These warriors are the cream of humanity, and are given ancient suits of powered armour. They are the Terminator Marines. They fear no enemy, and will die with unquestioning devotion.

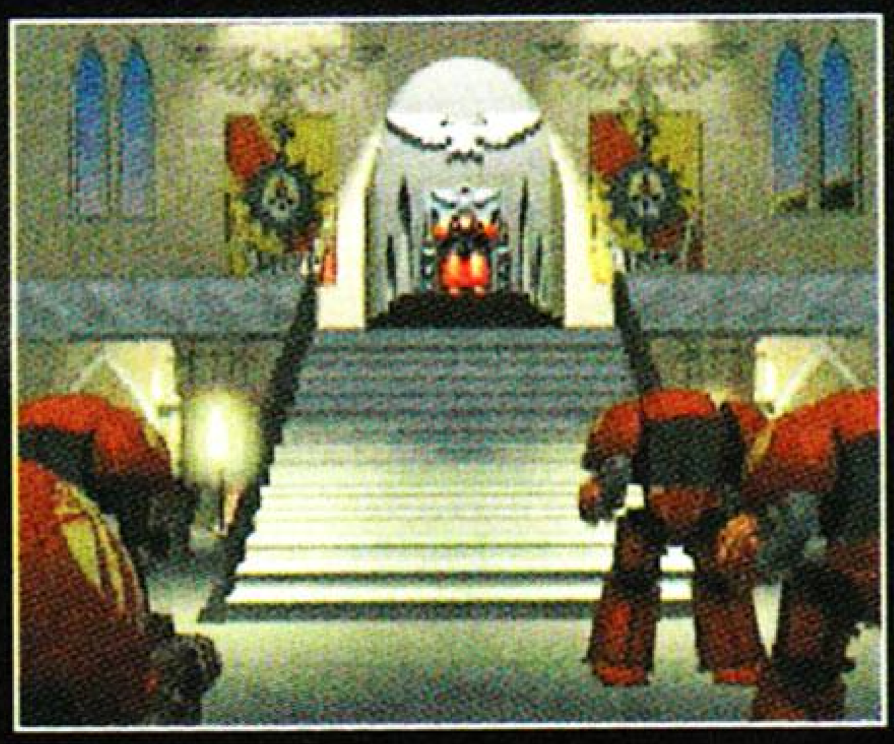
The honour of the Terminators has been bestowed upon you, after countless self-sacrificing acts of supreme courage. Hero of the Altus IIV conflict, your actions saved an entire population from an advancing Ork attack, despite losing a leg in the process. After severe cybernetic surgery, you were implanted into your Terminator suit, and waited for your next call to war. Your brethren are made of the same sturdy bio-engineered stuff, and all of you form the Terminator contingent of the Blood Angel Marines. The Blood Angels were formed just after the Imperium itself, and their undying loyalty to the Emperor has become legendary. Through your courage, the thousand-strong battalion has received spiritual fulfilment, and you have been chosen to lead your other brothers in a hundred-strong company of Tactical Dreadnought Marines.

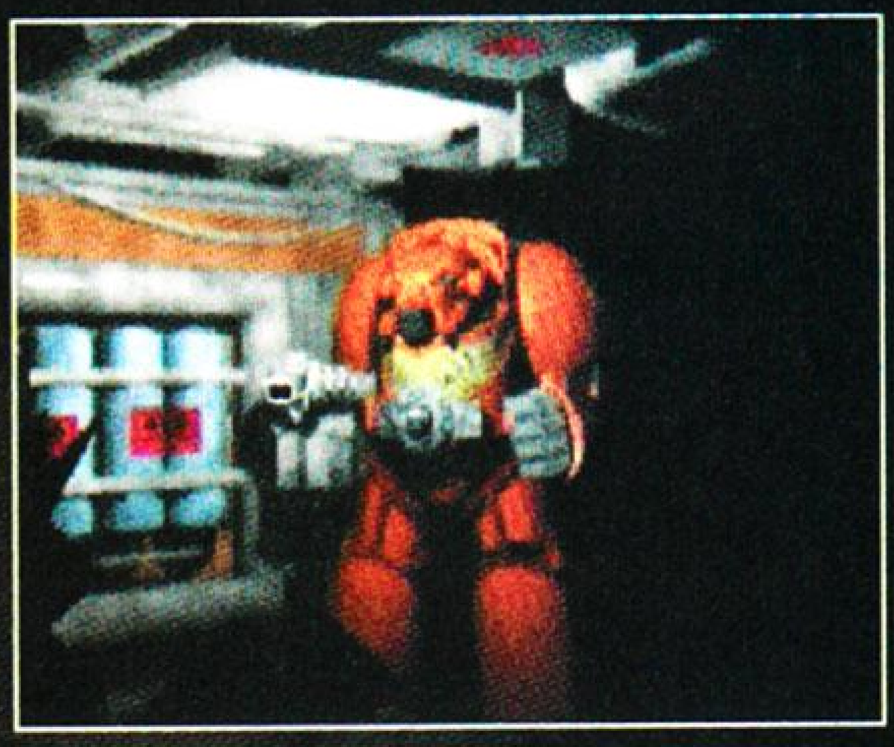
The fate of the Galactic Empire rests in your squad of Terminators! The Emperor is counting on your team's unfaltering and fearless devotion! Do not fail him!!

During your enhanced suit training, your company Chaplain becomes disturbed at the continuing tears throughout the ether of the cosmos. He believes that an alien influence is responsible for this instability, and his psychic wanderings inform him that a Genestealer Patriarch is somehow connected with this new terror. From your many encounters with the Genestealer species, you know of the true horror they hold, and have vowed to cleanse every last one of the them from the galaxy. When teaching the newer recruits about Genestealer combat techniques, you remind your initiates that these reptilian monstrosities have mutated into varying strains. The most ferocious are the deadly Purestrain Genestealers; huge six-limbed mutations with a frenzied taste for human flesh and a blindingly quick lolloping gait. Add to this, the fact that these beasts fear nothing, blindly charging at any moving human, and you have the perfect close-combat killing machine. The incursions posed by these creatures is immense; the greatest since the Ork galaxy invasions of 35563, and their threat becomes all the more grim when these recruits find out how the human population is required for Genestealer reproduction...

A graceful opening sequence shows the Blood Angel's floating chapel of dedication spinning through the cosmos to rendevous with a gigantic Space Hulk. A craft departs from this mothership to board the vessel, and the Chain Fist Terminators break through into the hold. Then the search-and-destroy mission begins!!





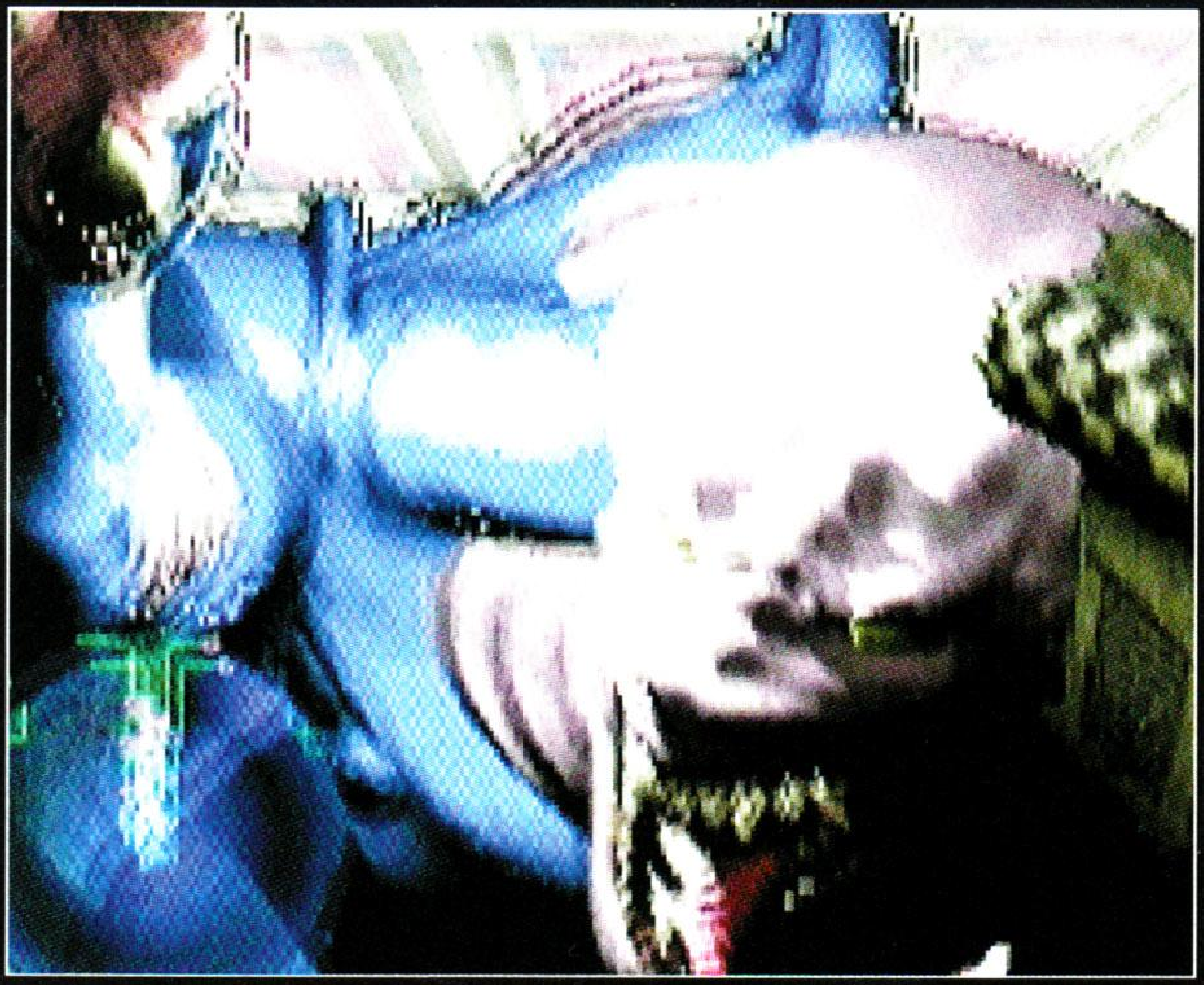


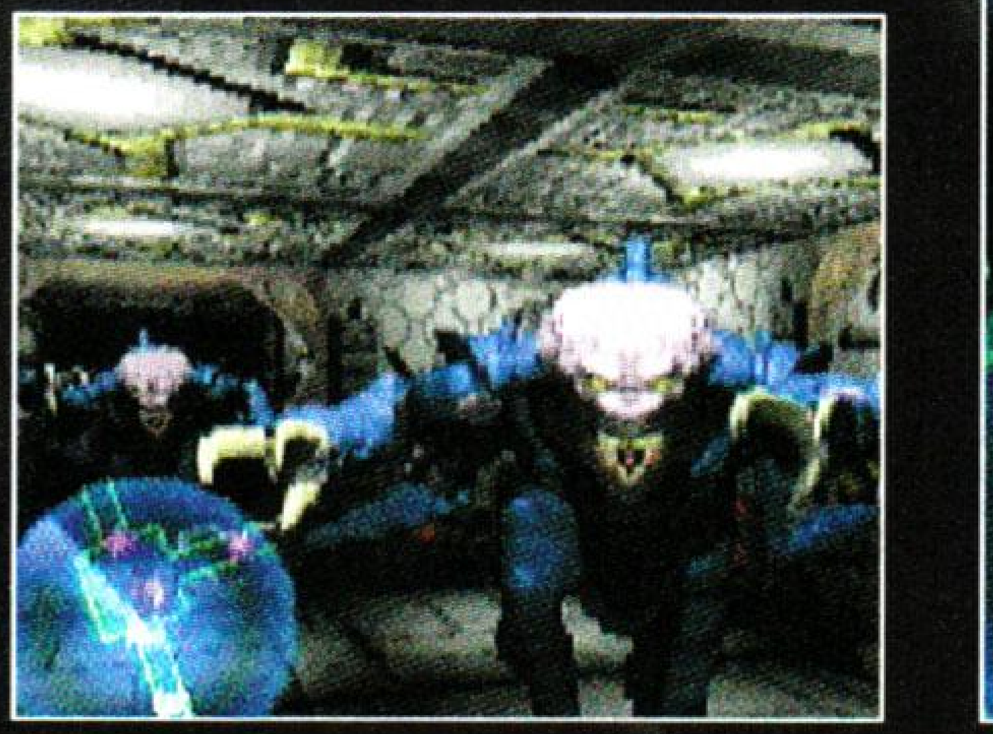
Electronic Arts create a fine adaptation of a Games Workshop classic! Arm up and wade into the fray!

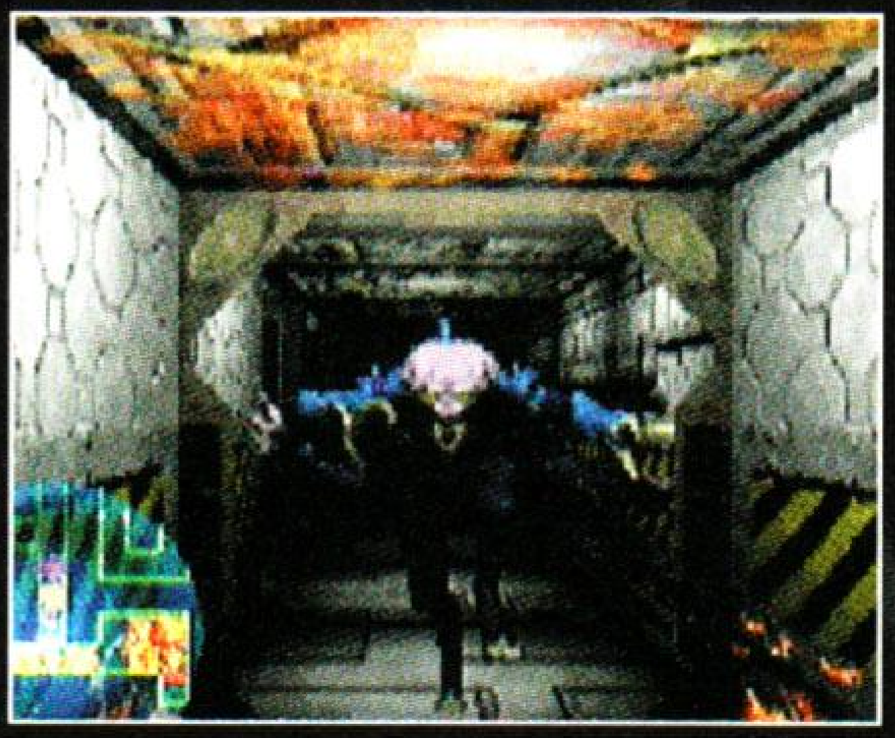
Investigate horrific secrets aboard a huge floating Space Hulk!

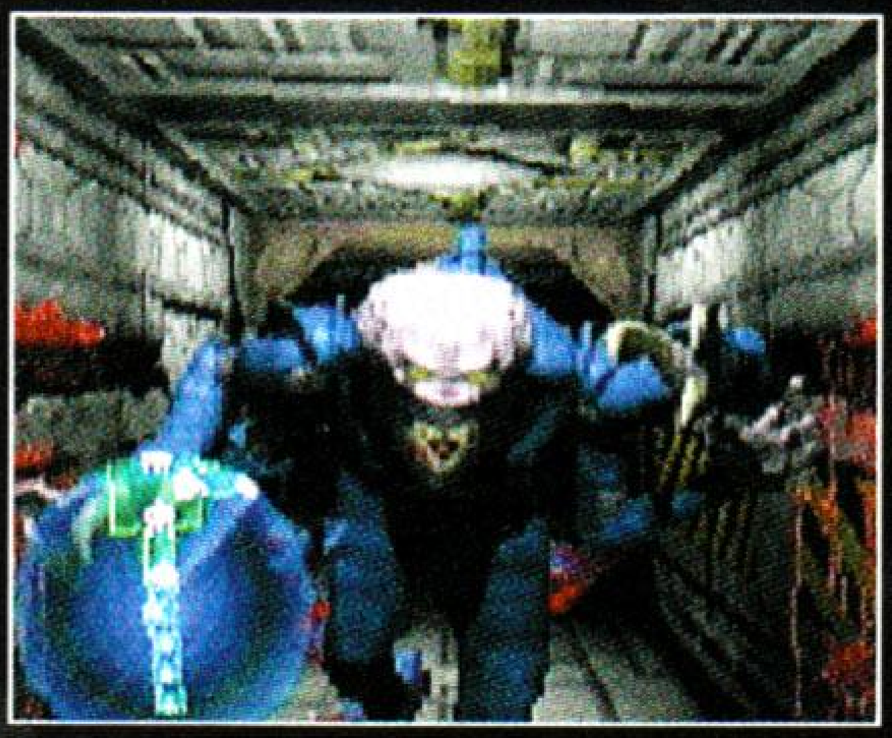
Originally from a far distant galaxy, the invading hordes of Genestealers first found humans to progress their strain of evil by boarding vast decaying warp vessels known as Space Hulks. Such massive star cruisers had long since become stranded in deep (and unpopulated) space after a Warp Drive failure, with the unlucky crews facing a long and drawn-out death. Once all human activity had ceased, a complement of Genestealers and their brood (headed by a Magus or Patriarch) boarded the craft and took up residence, remaining in a deep hibernetic slumber for centuries until the drifting hulk emerged into populated space. Once aroused by the psychic energies of adjacent humans, the Magus awakened his brood, ordering the less monstrous Genestealer hybrids to set about infiltrating a nearby planet. And so the impurity, tortured generations of human hybrids and successful Genestealer reproduction continued.

This is of course, until the Space Marines are called upon to purge an area of space of such unclean visitations. As normal marine armour crumbles under the razor sharp talons of the Purestrain Genestealers, and any of the Imperium's other troops flee in abject terror when encountering such inhuman entities, the honour of purifying the hulks has fallen to the Terminator squads of your chapter. Archaic reflector fields and interwoven plasti-steel armour blessed with the blood of the Emperor have helped previous Terminator units cleanse impure areas of Genestealers without incurring heavy losses, and this good fortune has pleased the Emperor, who shines his psychic beacon of light towards your outpost. Your commander is waiting for you in the briefing chamber and time is pressing, so bless your armour, load up your Storm Bolter and prepare for combat!







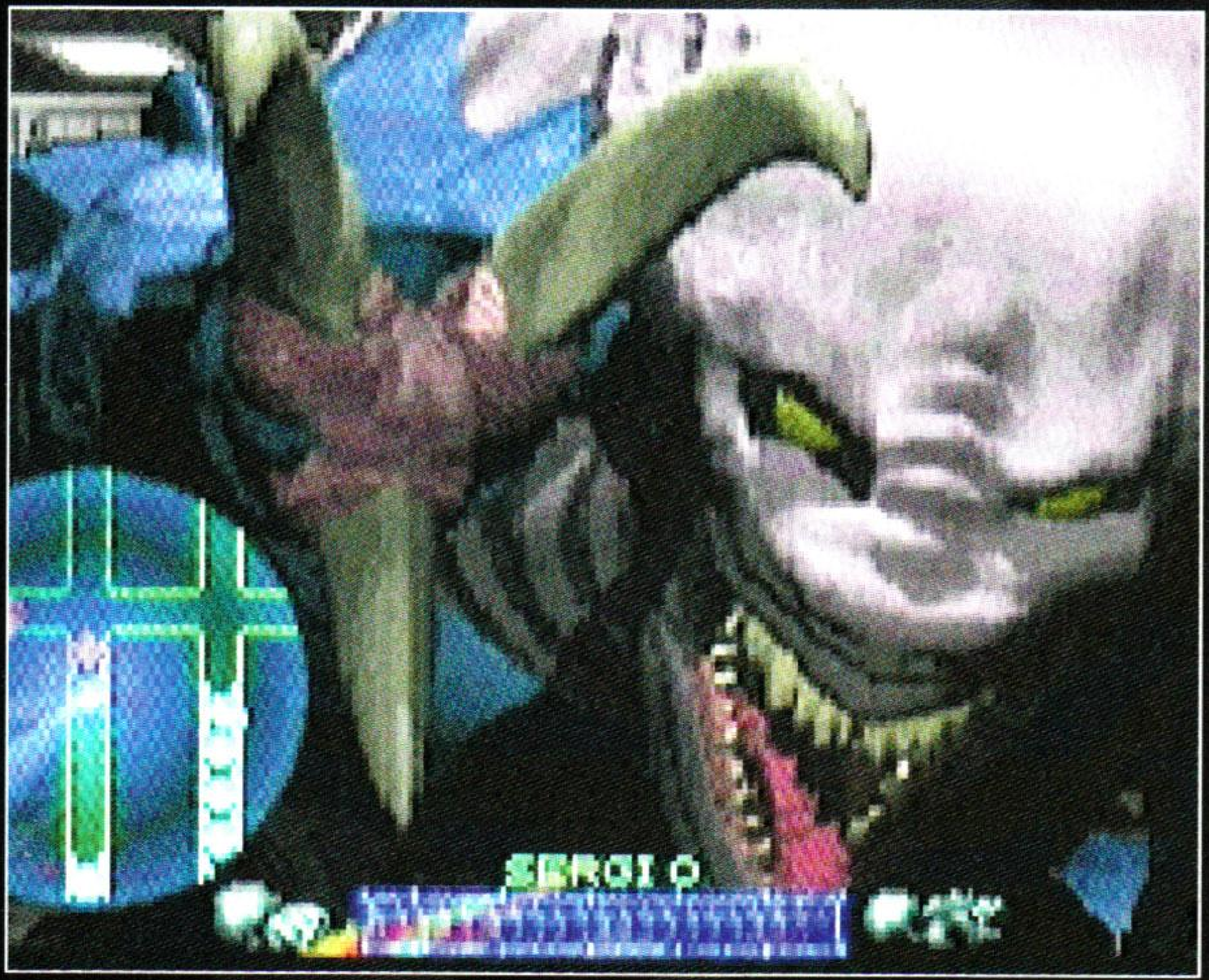


Face to face with a snarling alien Genestealer aboard the Space Hulk itself. Our heroic marine, armed with a Power Glove and Storm Bolter, takes on one of these beasts at close quarters (above). Meanwhile, his team mates encounter more charging Purestrain Genestealers and prepare to repel boarders!

TERMINATOR SQUAD 'VIGILANCE' DISPATCHED TO INTERCEPT UNKNOWN CRAFT! BE PURE AND PURGE THIS HULK OF ALL MALIGN HYBRIDS!!

Imperial broadcasts report a new and mysterious craft has entered your sector, and is heading for Delvar III. The Emperor has decreed that honour falls on the shoulders of the Blood Angels chapter to intercept the vessel, destroying all unknown lifeforms aboard before diverting the craft from a collision course. Your HUD patches you through to your squad, and you inform them of the predicament. Your commander has outlined the boarding strategy, and informed your squadron of their overriding mission objectives - the Hivemind must be destroyed at all costs!

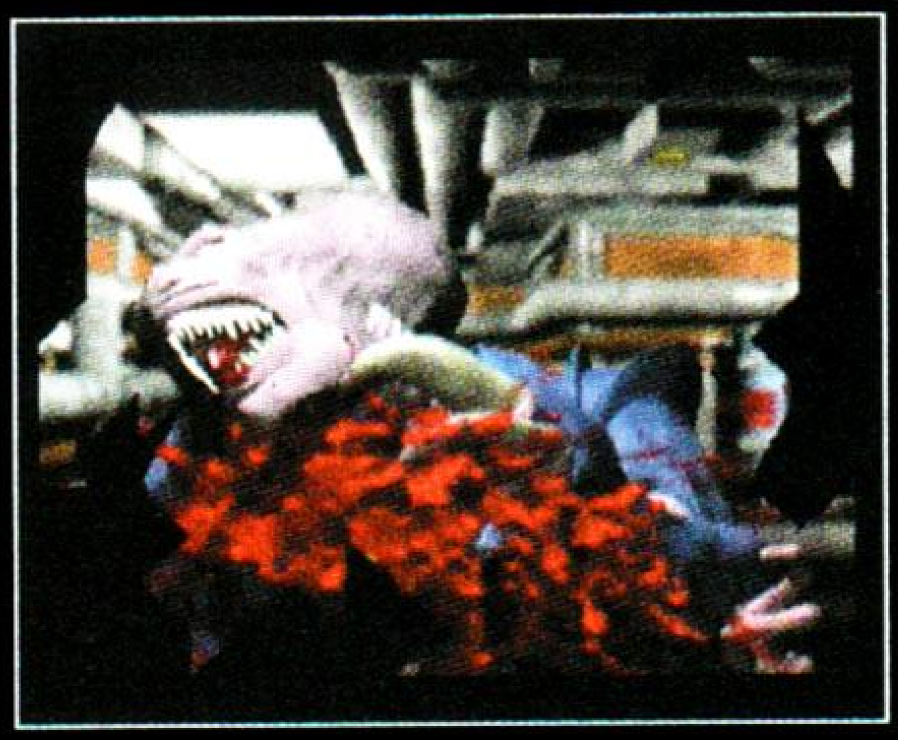
A mix of strategic exploration and frenzied combat! Strafe those Genestealers with awesome firepower!



Sergio, a rather reckless Terminator at the best of times, is about to find out how sharp a Purestrain Genestealer's claws really are (above). This frothing monster will be the last thing going through Sergio's mind, apart from a couple of talons and a frenzy of teeth!

After a thorough **MAXIMUM** recommendation in issue one, Space Hulk has finally made it from the 3DO to the major next-generation consoles with all the strategic and action elements intact. Electronic Arts have been hard at work converting all the horror and suspense of the original to the PC, Saturn and PlayStation, and now this title is appearing on a multitude of formats, **MAXIMUM** has taken the opportunity to reveal some of the many ways to improve your marines' chances in the combat zones of Space Hulk. The basic premise of the game is rather simple, with mission objectives leading to increased honour and the chance to battle against even more vicious foes amongst the dark and twisting interlocking corridors of a decaying battle ship. Although the game has many elements of the Doom genre, the strategic elements are far more advanced than those in id's classic. A quick and savage death awaits those marines who simply leave the rest of their squad to stomp off into the darkness to gun everything down - now a Space Hulk player must view his holo-map and scrutinise each and every corridor before positioning all his marines and flicking between all of them.

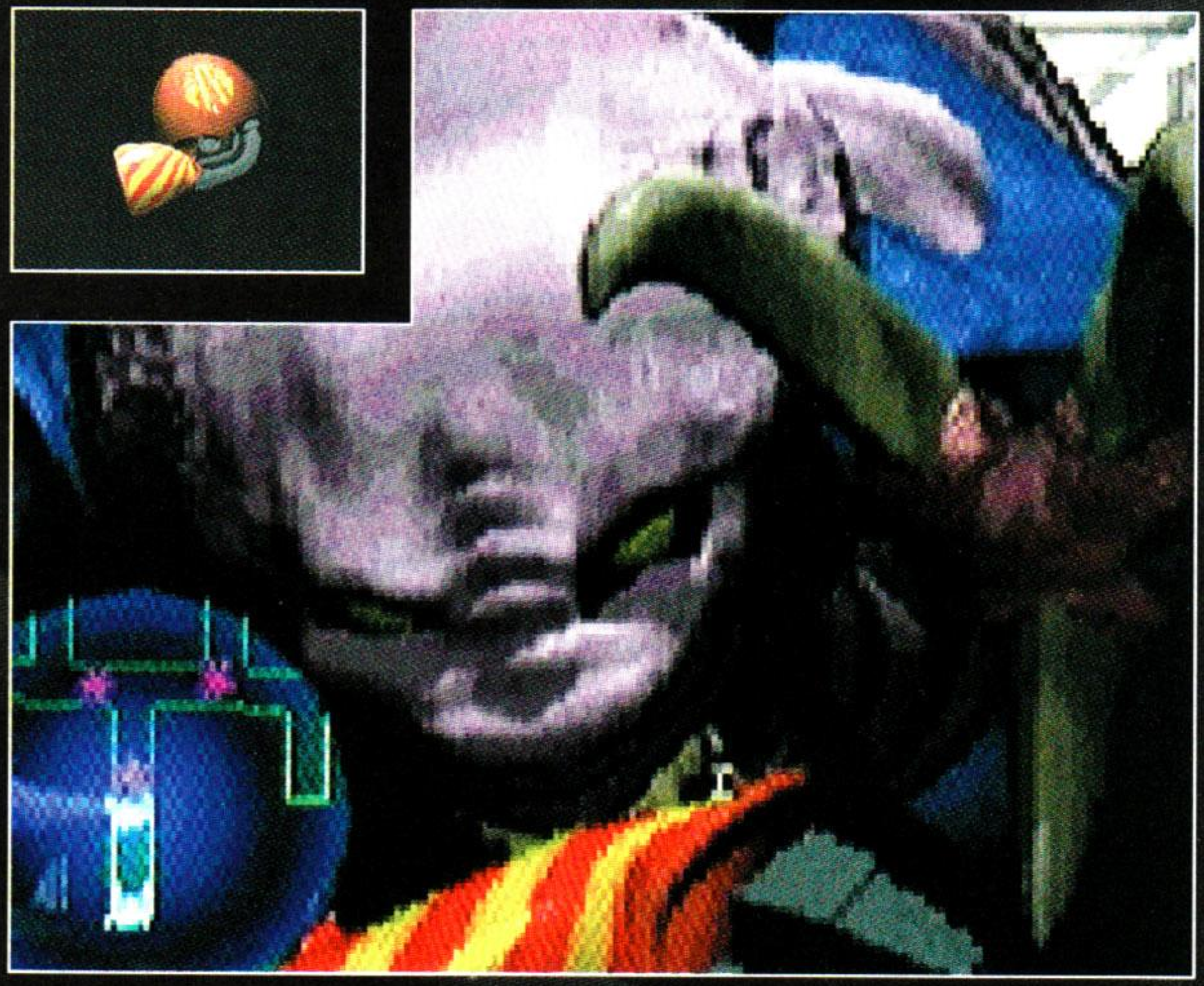
This adds an extra dimension to your gaming experience, and moves the action along at an even more frantic pace. With this in mind, **MAXIMUM** has decided to don a Tactical Dreadnought suit and get to grips with the horrific alien entities of the game in the usual gratuitous style. First, we try our hand at both long range and close combat by equipping our Terminator with all of the Imperium's latest high-tech weaponry and sending him off into the darkness. Upon his (hopeful) return, we examine the vid-footage of all the adversaries he encountered before placing him in a detachment of Blood Angels Terminators to check out his combat performance and leadership abilities. The Glory of the Emperor is at stake! Let the exploration begin! Death to the Hivemind!



EXTENDED PLAY

Gaze into the face of death...! This little beauty is at the centre of any Terminator's worst nightmare. Watch for this chap's incredible speed, agility and sharp claws, and you should stand a chance. Once hand-to-hand begins in earnest, a lucky strike sometimes results in the gruesome and blood-splattered death of a Purestrain (left). Cleanse for the Emperor!

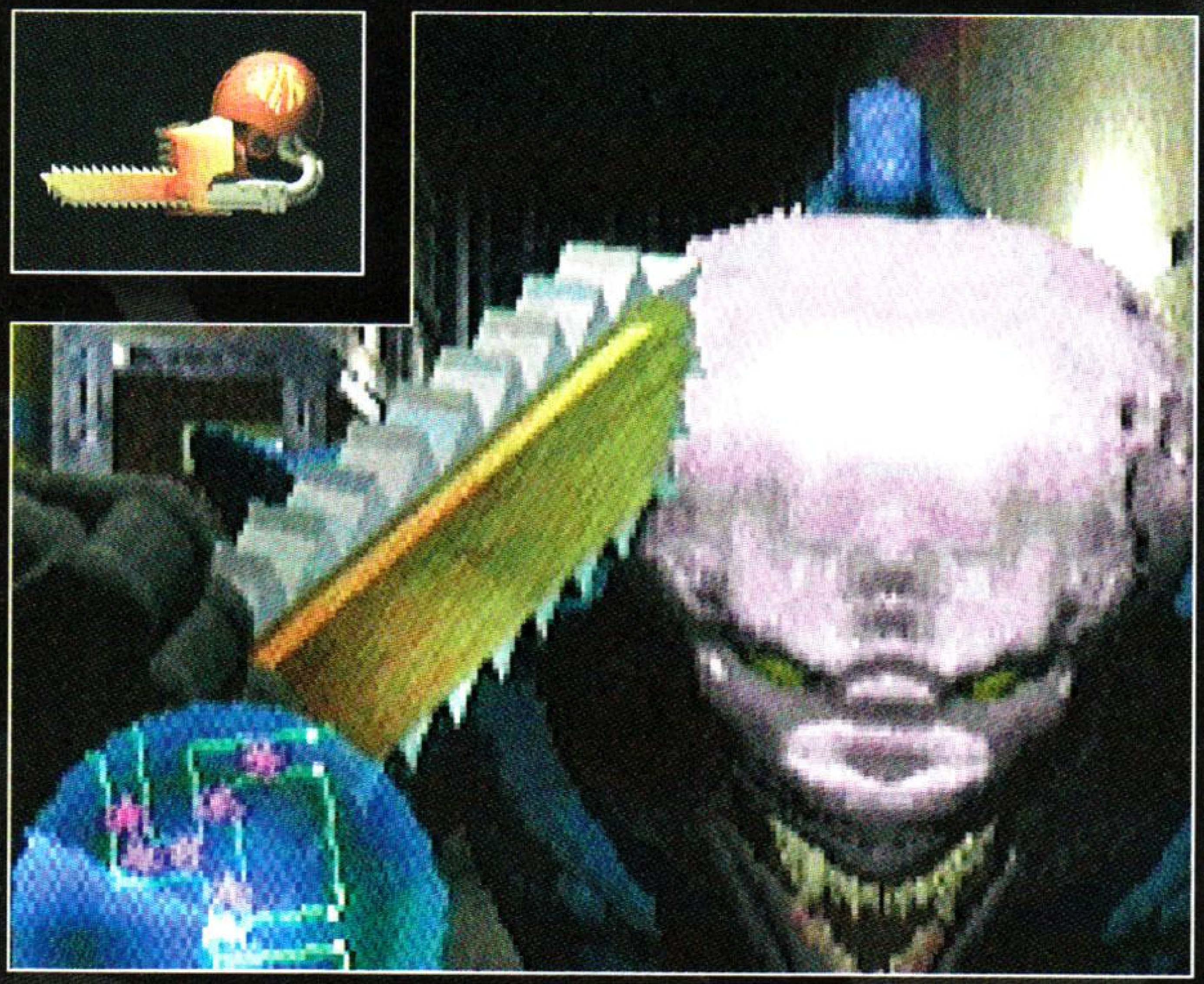
This isn't just another bug hunt!! Face the genestealer army with the finest weapons of the imperium!



Lionus, fabled flamer Terminator of the IMperium, decides to employ a little one-on-one Power Glove action with a Purestrain (below). After a brief dodge, the Purestrain receives a massive portion to the head before a now enraged Lionus finishes the job. An excellent combat performance from Lionus, let there be no doubt!

1 POWER GLOVE - A HUGE CLOSE COMBAT GAUNTLET THAT PACKS A HEFTY PUNCH!

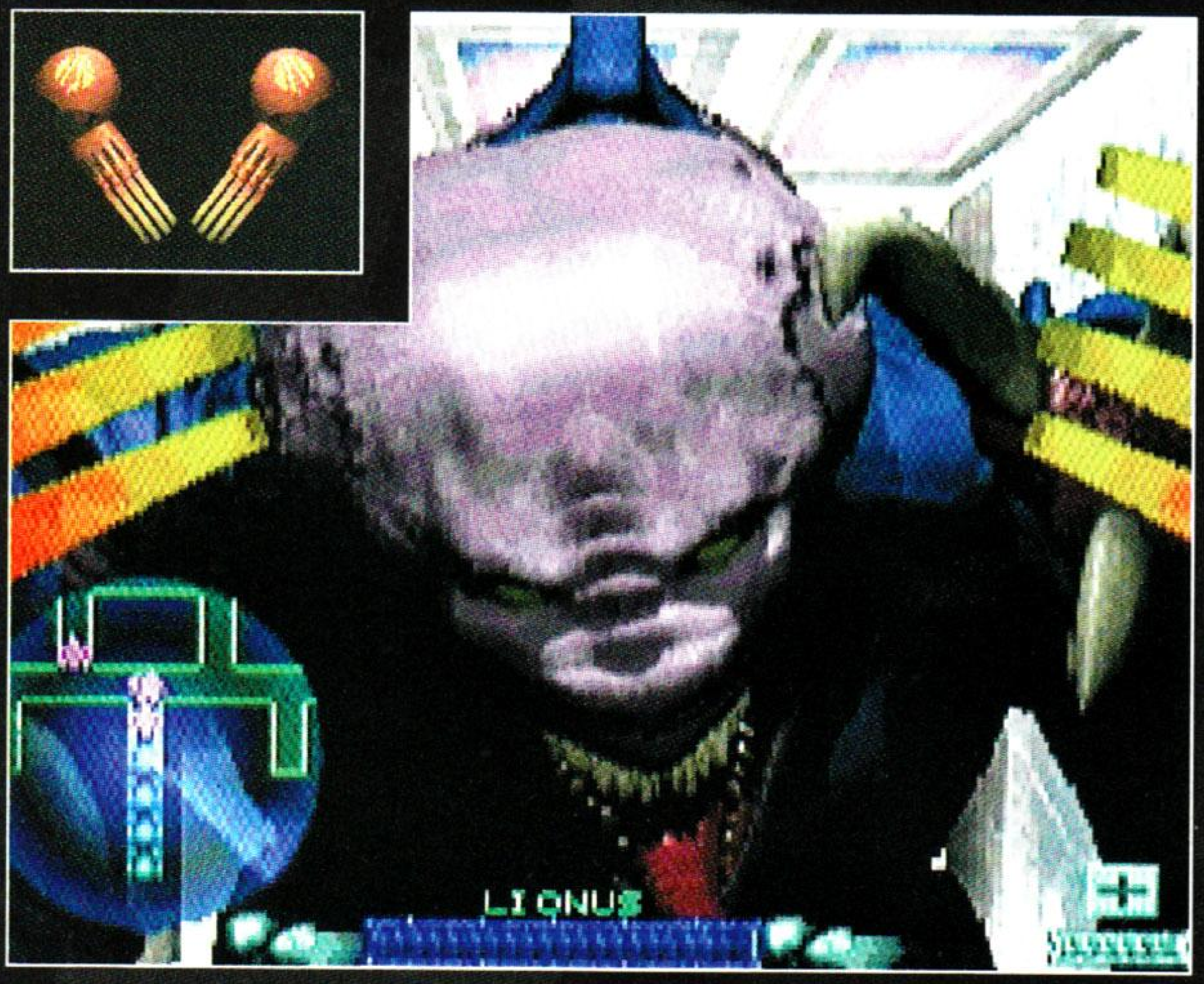
A mass of interweaving plasti-steel fibres forms a flexible and extremely heavy powered glove, which can be moved and flexed like a normal hand with the help of suspensors. This alone is a formidable close assault glove, able to pound through steel after a couple of hits, but the real strength lies in the arching electrical charges that pass through the fibres. When these are powered up, they inflict terrible burning damage to an enemy, who usually crumples to the ground in a seething mass of electrical discharge. The Power Glove is the favoured Terminator trooper weapon, secured onto the left hand, and complimenting the Bolter perfectly. Once engaged in close combat with a Purestrain Genestealer, the Terminator has the option of either blocking or swinging a well-timed punch into the head of the snarling foe. Both these techniques require practice, and the usual method of Genestealer takedown is a little luck and a block, followed by a Power Glove straight to the chops.



An altogether more satisfying close combat death occurs when a Terminator marine employs a little Chain Fist persuasion (above). With the whirr of the blade and a Genestealer in your face, the time is right for some gruesome Chain Fist action!

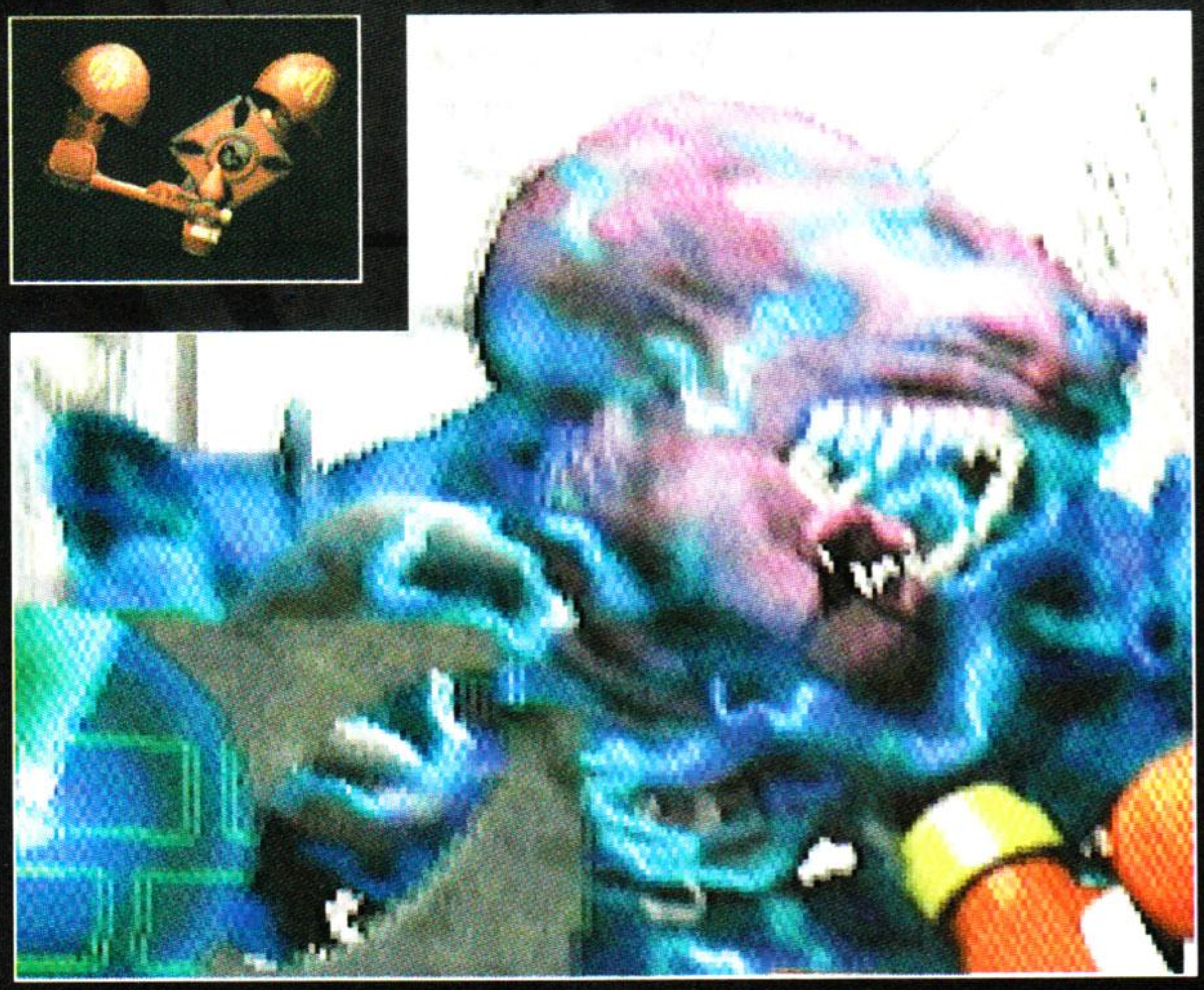
2 CHAIN FIST - SLICE THROUGH CARAPACE AND STEEL IN A BLAZING FRENZY!

A variant of the Power Glove is the Chain Fist. This is essentially a glove with a whirring blade of titanium slotted onto the end. First used to breach Space Hulk doors, the fist soon found favour with assault troopers who found the whirring electrical saw blade to be excellent at dispatching foes. The heavyweight nature of the weapon matches the damage caused but means only power-suited troopers were able to wield the Chain Fist effectively, but had an added advantage over the Power Glove when it came to breaking down defences. Under Imperial guidance, the Chain Fist found favour with troopers armed with the Assault Cannon, although the Blood Angels impose a more lenient 'mix and match' policy. A Terminator marine should employ the following tactic when armed with either the Glove or FIst: First, he uses his Bolter to strafe advanced enemies before closing in with a well-timed strike at close quarters.



3 LIGHTNING CLAWS - RIP THROUGH YOUR FOE IN A SLASH OF DAZZLING ELECTRICITY!

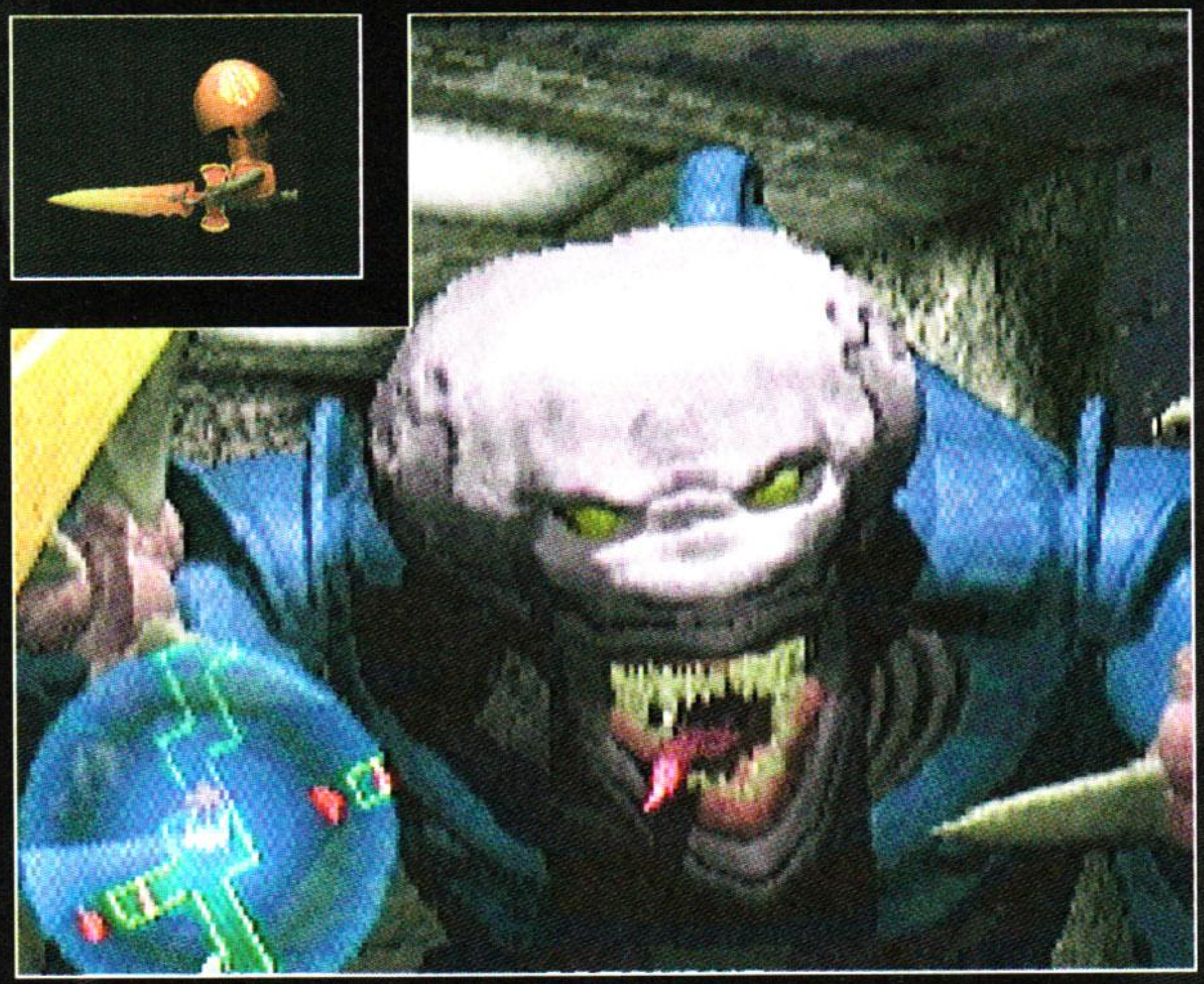
The more highly strung Terminator marines (or those with numerous bravery recommendations) are given a thorough mental examination and those who show signs of unnatural bloodlust are fitted with a pair of Lightning Claws. In your Space Hulk missions, particularly bloody encounters call for an insane marine to jump into the fray whilst the rest of squad head for a waypoint, and such honour usually falls to the Terminator with Lightning Claws. In combat, quickly hack and slice before the Purestrains clamp their jaws around your armour, and you'll find that they fall under the awesome power of these slashing implements. A simple storm in and hack seems to work well, but remember to parry a particularly furious attack.

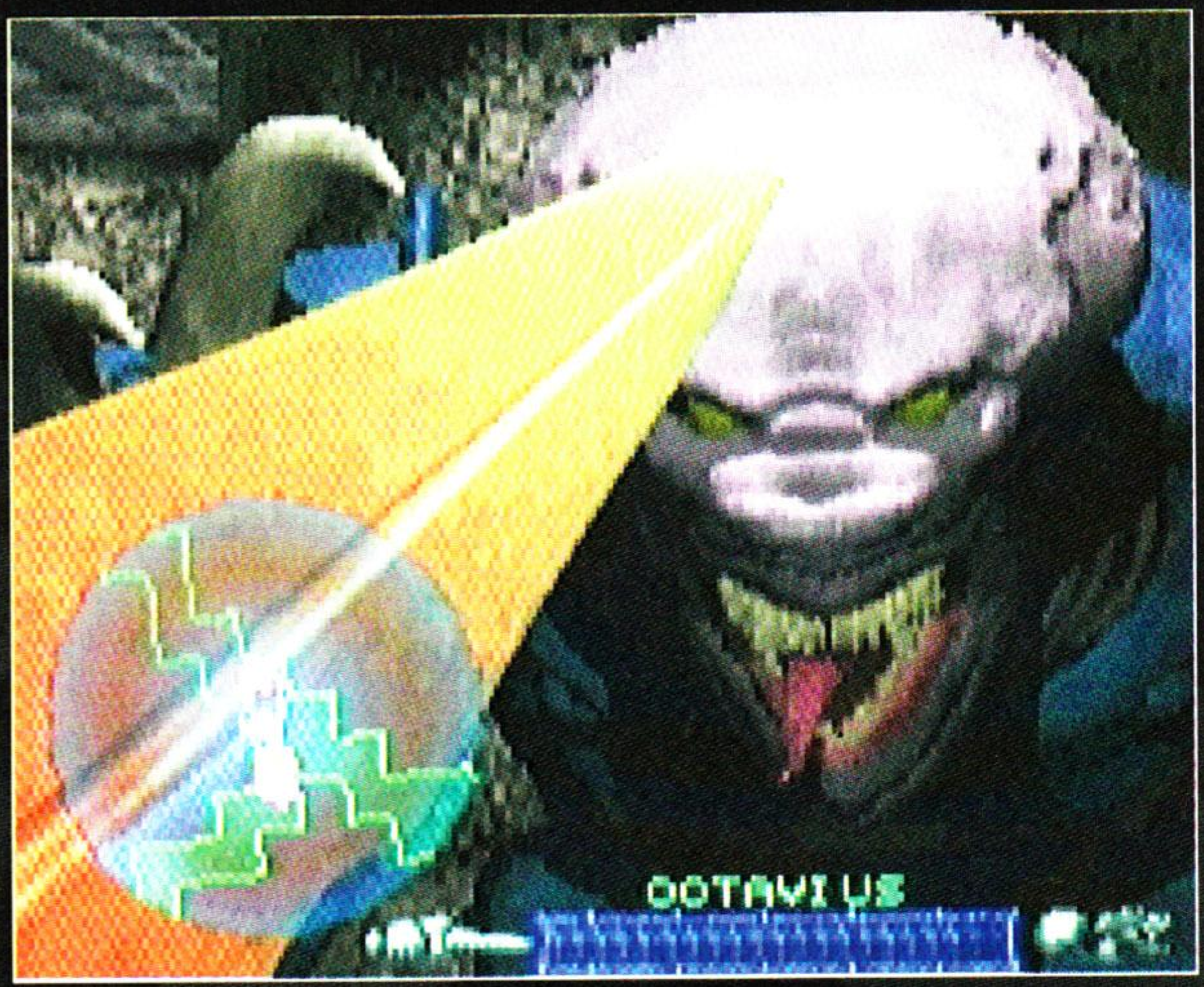


4 THUNDER HAMMER - UNLEASH TERRIBLE POUNDING DAMAGE ON THE IMPURE! USE THE STORM SHIELD TO DEFLECT A CLAWING ATTACK!

The last close assault weapon to be used extensively in conflict throughout the galaxy is the Thunder Hammer. Employed exclusively with an energy deflector known as the Storm Shield, these were originally carried by members of the Imperial priesthood on their galactic missions to convert whole planets to the ways of the Emperor. Seeing the effectiveness at quelling subversion, the Emperor decreed that all Terminator squadrons should feature a Thunder Hammer carrier amongst their ranks. In combat, this swinging mace-like implement causes massive crushing damage that can crumble Genestealer armour, whilst the shield protects the user from any enemy retaliations. When using a marine armed in such a manner, the best bet is to send him straight into the heart of a battle where he can attract attention and inflict most damage, whilst the rest of your squad meet the commander's mission objectives.

Octavius, a level-headed Sergeant with past experience of dealing with the impure and frankly hideous, has little problems swiping at a snarling Purestrain. "Be just and fear not" he cried, before beheading another Genestealer.

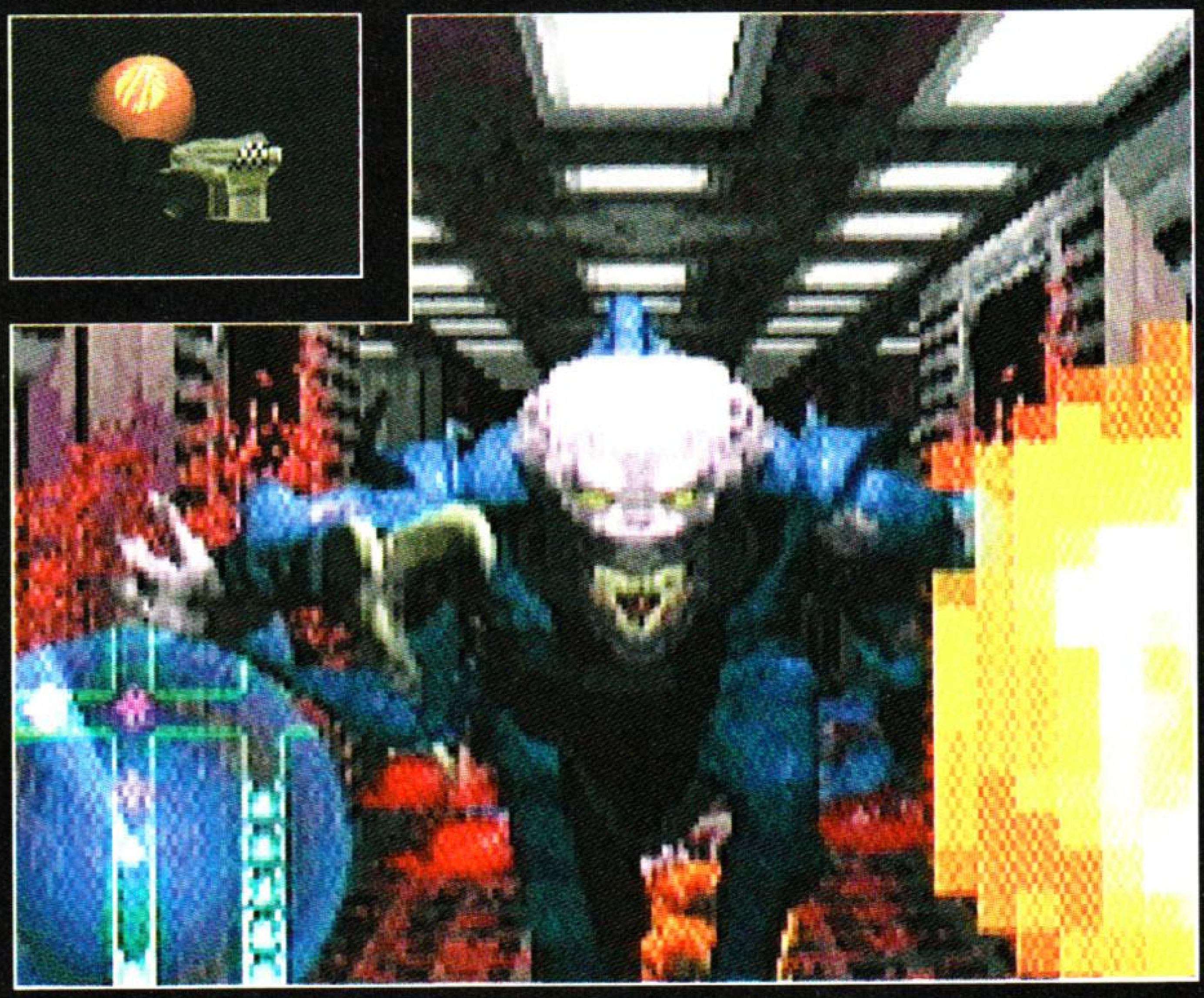




5 POWER SWORD - SLICE AND STAB WITH AN ENERGY SWORD OF PURE LIGHT!

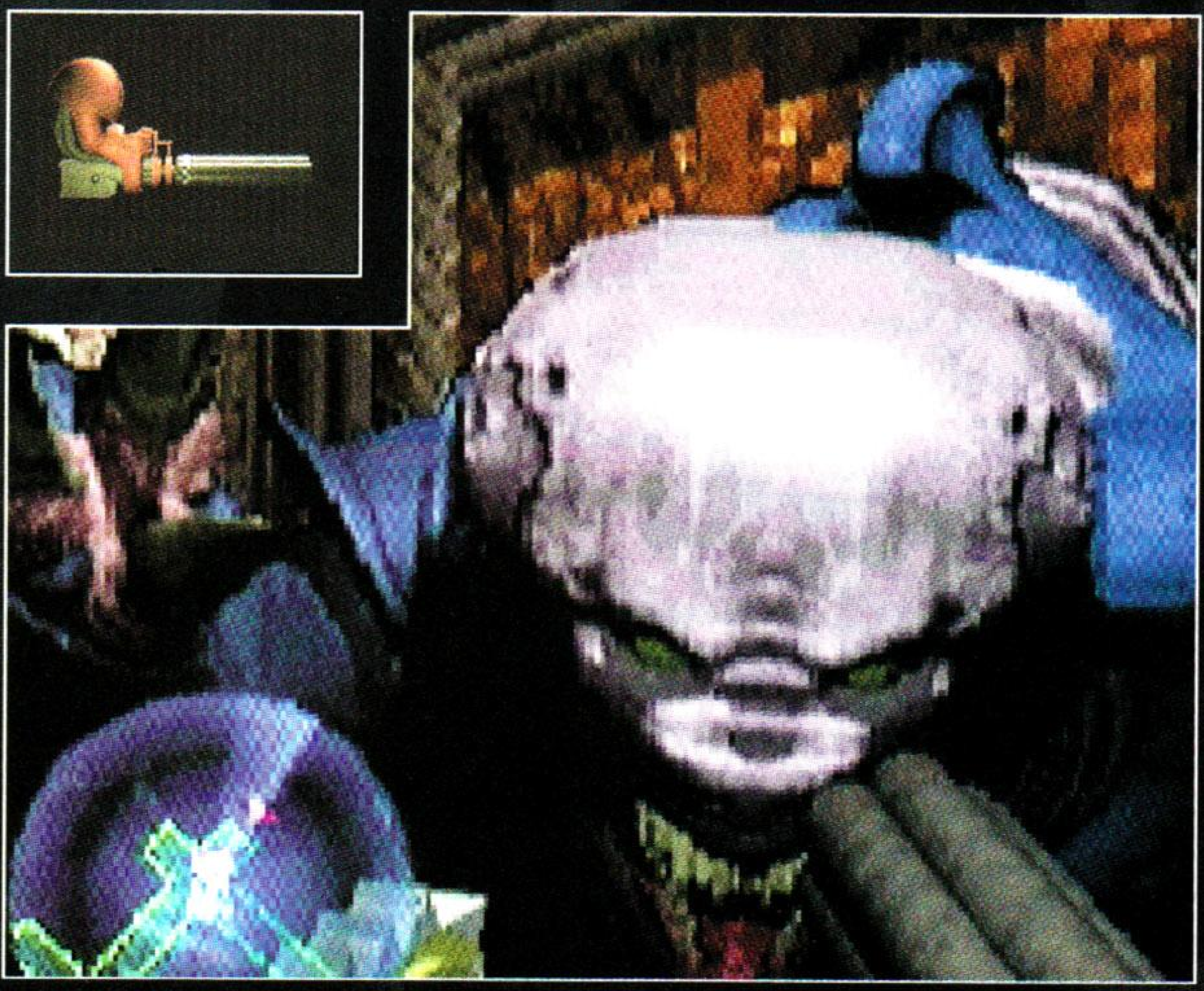
The Power Sword hacks back to days many millennia ago when a dispute was settled with cold steel against steel. In keeping with tradition, the Emperor's favourite weapon was transformed by the advent of technology until it became the preferred close combat arm for Terminator Sergeants. Quick slashing motions coupled with a charge of plasma energy ensured that enemies didn't stay in one piece for long, and this rule seems to work in Space Hulk combat itself. Whittle down your opposition with Bolter fire, and then hack away at a snarling foe with your orange blade of energy and hope for the best, Not nearly as powerful in combat as the Chain Fist or Power Glove, the Power Sword is the most honourable weapon to fit to a Terminator suit, and marks a marine who has shown unquestioning devotion to his commander and the Imperium.

A spot of ranged combat is the order of the day here, as Purestrain after Purestrain scamper towards you with demonic glee. In the tense atmosphere of the Space Hulk, a Terminator must keep a stready nerve, and an itchy trigger finger!



6 STORM BOLTER - GUN DOWN ALIEN ATROCITIES WHILE THEY CLOSE IN FOR THE KILL!

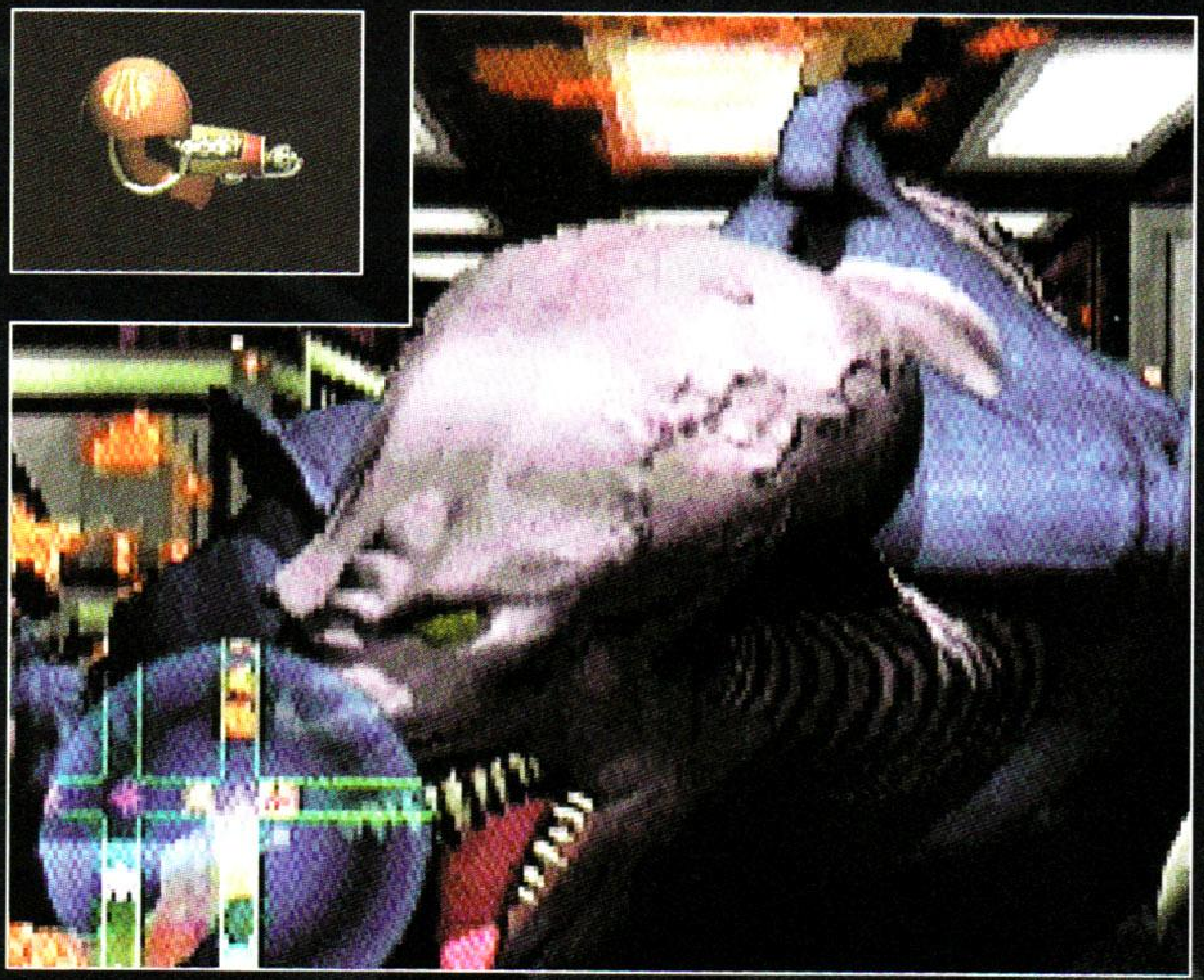
The first of the Terminator's ranged weaponry is the standard issue Bolter. Firing hard pointed armour-piercing shells that explode into thousands of shrapnel pieces on impact, the bolter has been responsible for the most deaths of any weapon throughout armed conflict. Imperial mechanics seized this opportunity, and designed a double-barrelled version of the bolter which, although extremely heavy, could cut deep into a victim before the explosive shrapnel finished the job. After manufacturing several thousand Storm Bolters the engineers fitted them to Terminator squads, and they have become the usual side arm ever since. Obviously a complete systems check was not possible before the Blood Angels boarded the Space Hulk, as the Storm Bolter has a tendency to jam when rapid fire is engaged. To prevent this, fire your Storm Bolter is short quick bursts at charging Genestealers; otherwise you risk becoming temporarily unarmed as three or four monstrous creatures descend to devour you!



Bring on the heavy ordinance! A multiple barrelled Assault Cannon is ideal for gunning down whole swarms of Genestealers which is hande, because the missions become increasingly more difficult.

7 ASSAULT CANNON - STRAFE, CULL AND HOSE DOWN ALIENS WITH EXTREME HASTE!

When the Genestealer incursions first became a major headache for the Imperium, the Emperor ordered the finest minds to formulate an armament capable of piercing the thick Genestealer hide and carapace armour. After numerous tests (and on-site disasters involving the implosion of several hundred Gretchin), a rapidly spinning barrel connected to a plentiful supply of ammunition was chosen, due to problems of implementing proper warp weapons. This Assault Cannon prototype now graces a specially trained marine with enhanced battlefield vision, who provides covering fire in all combat situations. On board the vast sprawling Hulks, the Assault Cannon carrier is excellent for patrolling long corridors, as he can fire into the darkness and take down a wandering Genestealer from hundreds of feet. Position your chosen marine at a corridor entrance and press that rotary cannon trigger!

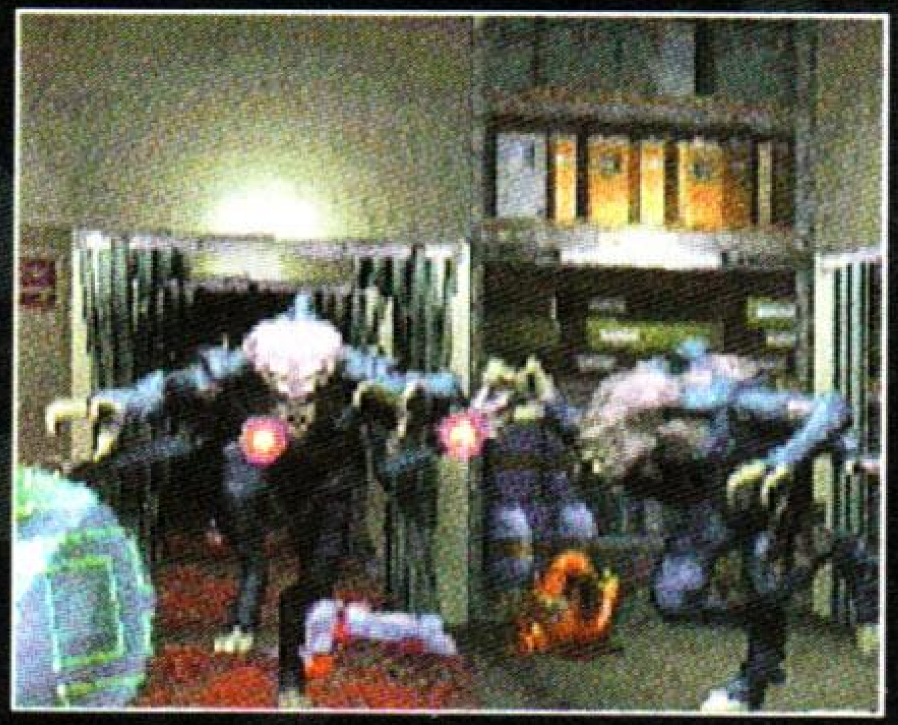


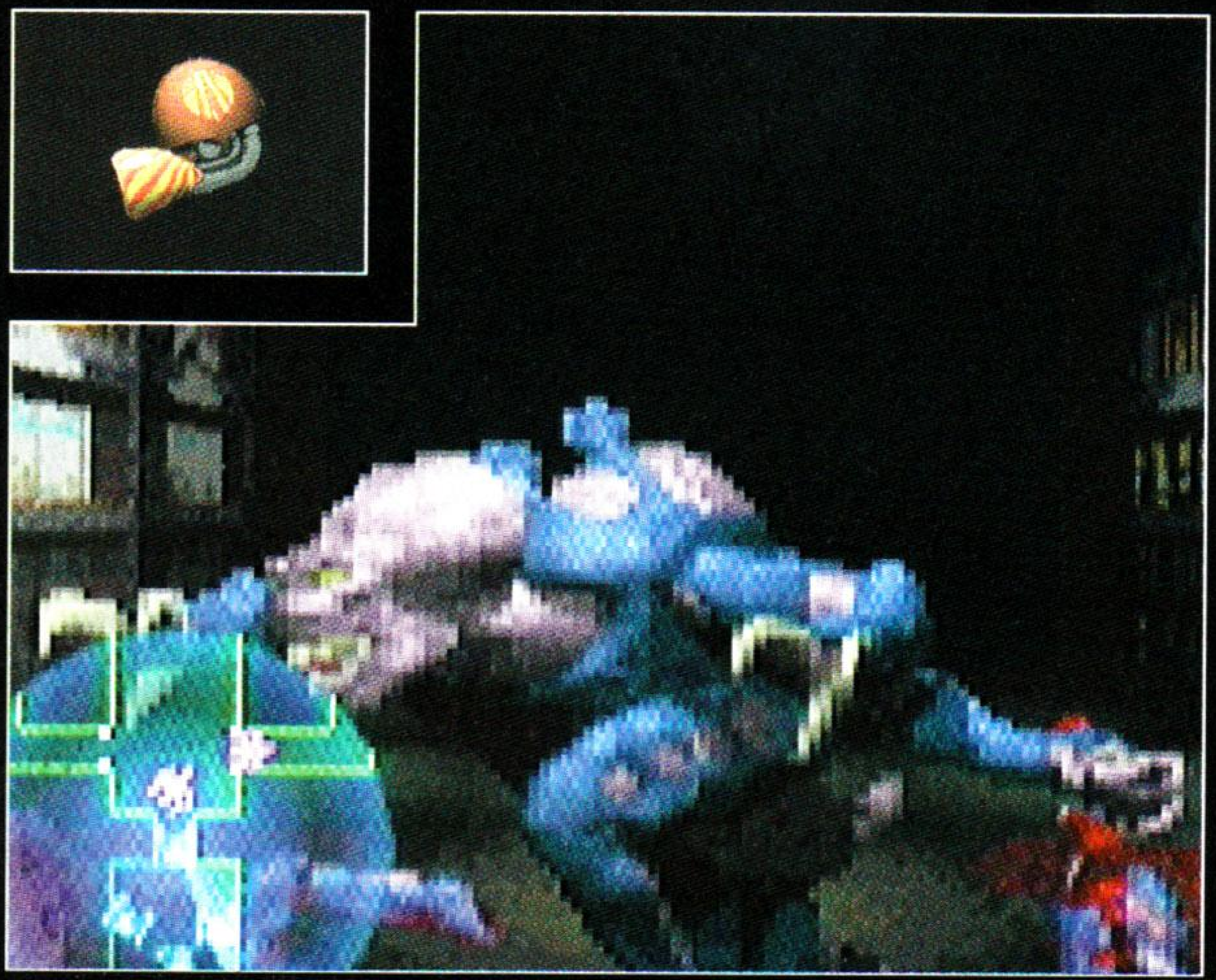
8 FLAMER - TORCH WHOLE ROOMS, CORRIDORS AND THE LARGEST OF GENESTEALERS IN MOLTEN NAPALM!

Many of the later missions in Space Hulk require certain areas of a Space Hulk to be cleansed of impurities, or simply torched and left to burn. When the Blood Angel Commander calls for such actions, a couple of special marines accompany the Terminator unit, and these are armed with special portable flame-throwers that coat entire corridors with flaming contaminant. Used with great success in various scorch and burn operations across the Imperium, the small portable units have heavy protective armour guards to protect the carrier from a penetrating hit. An exploding Terminator is likely to engulf 500 square metres, so this extra guarding is a must. When positioning your Terminator flamer carriers, it is wise to protect them, and not to engage them in severe Genestealer battles. A flamer can burn many Genestealers before the flames die down, but remember the limited fuel supply, especially when mission objectives require the cleansing of a sector by fire.

You'll also encounter fire when faced with the leader of a Genestealer hivemind - the Magus. He is able to summon magical gouts of fire to aid him in this continuing quest to preserve the Genestealer brood. Either way, the spectacular effects of the fire licking the walls and ceilings of the derelict Hulk provide some of the most awe-inspiring combats yet seen in the game. Just remember your limited supply of fuel and susceptability to the many psychic attacks of the Magus.

Our Terminator Captain was most entertained by the new consignment of Grenade Launchers that were fitted to the Power Gloves of his company. As you can see, the two Genestealer who tried to take him on were met with an appropriate response (right).





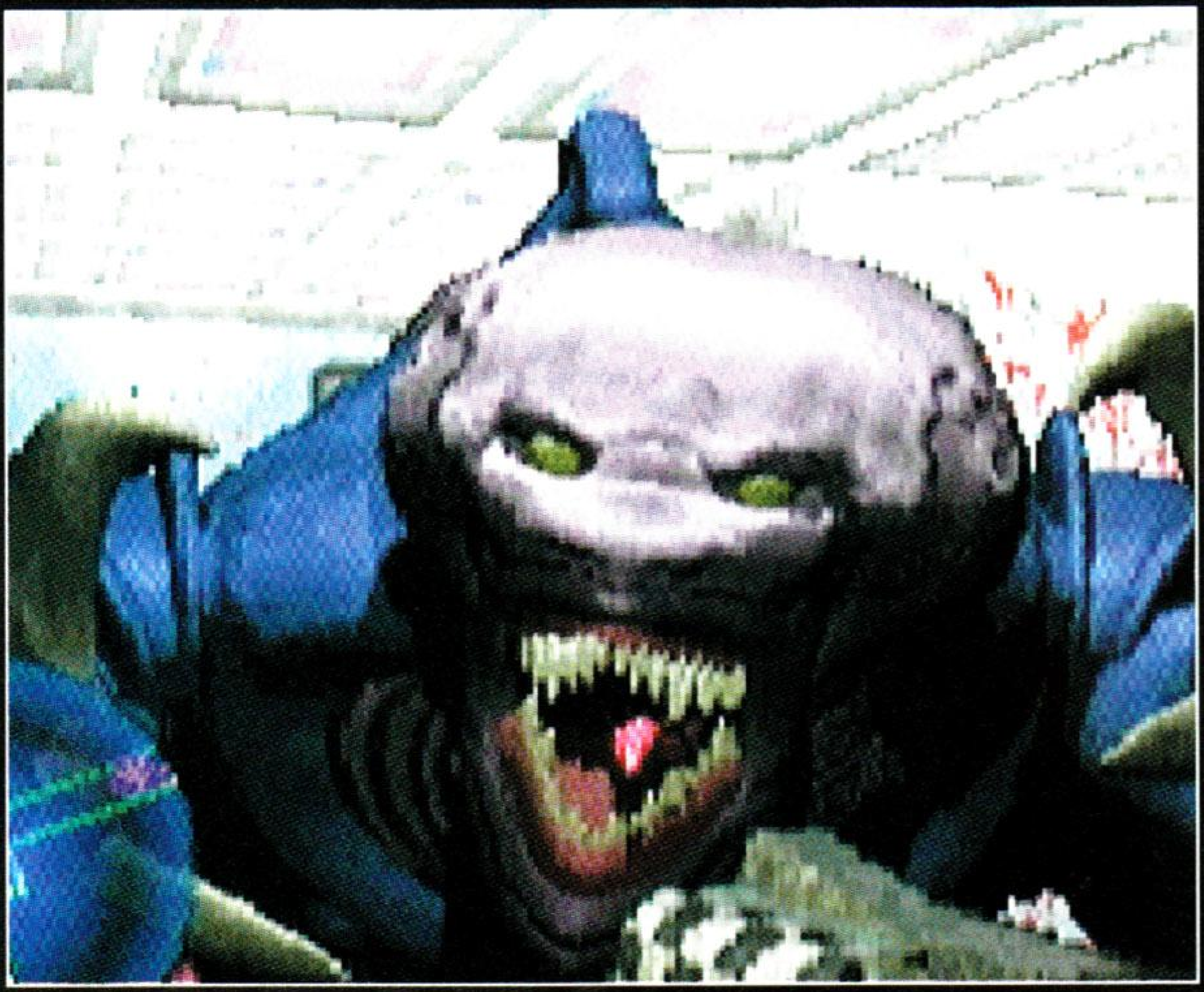
9 GRENADE LAUNCHER - MINIMUM BOUNCE AND MAXIMUM SPREAD - TAKE COVER, TROOPERS!

Usually fitted to the Commander's Power Glove, the Grenade Launcher has proven to be an expensive piece of Jokaro digital weaponry, but one that can lay down excellent suppressing fire in the tightest of situations. Those favoured Terminators that enter the Hulks armed with Grenade Launchers are at a distinct ranged advantage; and able to fire two weapons in unison. Proven in the battlefields, the Launchers have a wide burst of Frag ammunition, and are also effective in confined spaces. Beware the ammunition supply, use with caution and you may rejoice with religious fervour at the number of Genestealers you may dispatch with one aimed shot. The only real problem with the Grenade Launcher is that the ammunition supply is somewhat limited, so the best policy seems to be that of conserving your remaining grenades before launching them into areas infested with Purestrains. Use this method of Genestealer control, and you'll be able to destroy whole regiments of these impurities!

PURESTRAIN GENESTEALERS - A SIX-LIMBED KILLING MACHINE WITH A LUST FOR BLOOD!

The main enemy that faces a Terminator when wandering the immense and eerie decks of a Space Hulk (apart from the fear building inside you) is the Purestrain Genestealer. Both a hideous mutation and guardian of the hivemind, these huge and many-limbed entities are built for combat, and are used extensively for this purpose. Exhibiting no fear even when faced with overwhelming odds, the Purestrain Genestealer benefits from carapace armour and almost no emotion, save for an unstoppable rage that consumes every living thing. The Purestrain employs a simple tactic in the combat zone; running forwards at high speed on two muscular hooves before leaping onto a victim before devouring them in a frenzy of bloodletting. So powerful is a Purestrain's charge that even a marine's power armour affords little protection from the Purestrain's long talons. It has also mutated with a pair of human arms (covered in yet more carapace armour) in order to grab a victim while the talons rent the twitching body apart, and the sharp fangs finish the job. All in all, this has to be one of the most adept killing machines in the known Imperium.

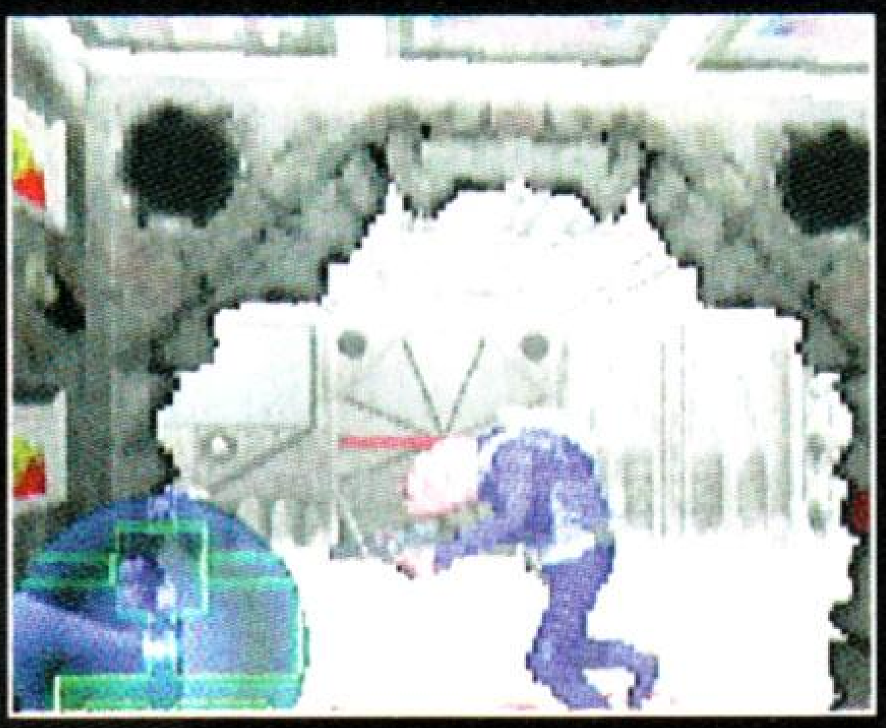
Faced with a corridor full of these frothing impurities, a Terminator must think fast or lose his life. Those Terminators armed with conventional weapons should gun down any Purestrains as they close, before switching to a Power Glove attack when face-to-face. These critters are the fastest type of Genestealer by far, and a slight backpedal followed by frantic bolter fire should see off any of these marauding Purestrains. Close combat marines only have the option to engage, and therefore should begin to block almost immediately, switching to a quick weapon blow after the Purestrain has attempted a strike. Lastly, those Terminators with heavy weapons would do well to strafe (or burn) as many Purestrains as possible, and have a slight advantage over the normally equipped marines. With a little practice, this scourge of the Imperium will be wiped from the face of the galaxy! Glory to the Emperor!



Up close and personal. Our Terminator discovers just how ugly Purestrain Genestealers really are before hand-to-claw combat begins. Also note one of the less competent Terminators in our squad, who was literally ripped apart by an advancing Purestrain (top right).

FOUR FEARSOME ALIEN ATROCITIES TO ATTACK WITHOUT FLINCHING!

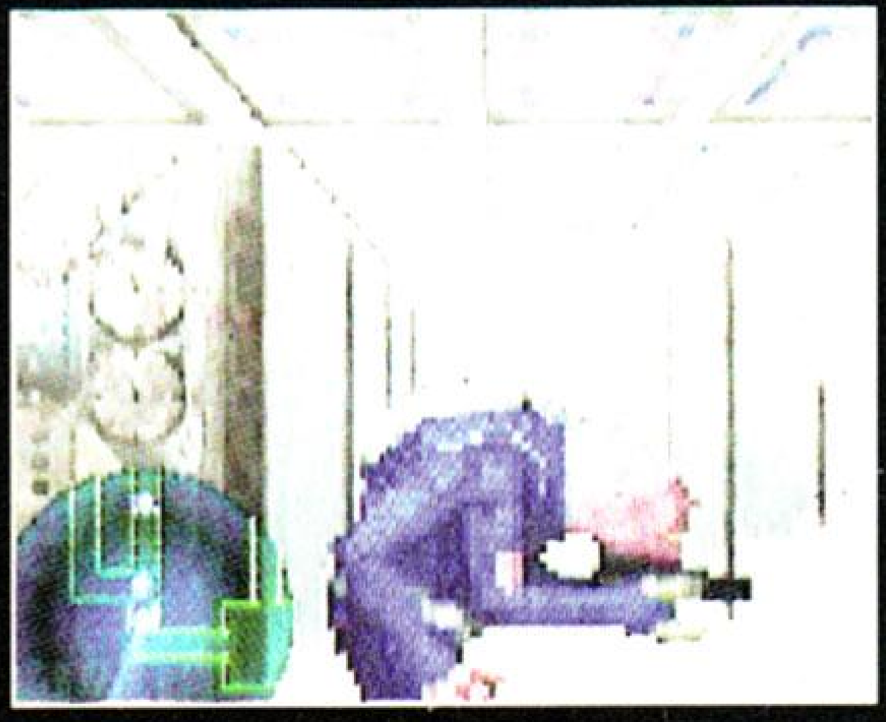
DESTROY THE FEARSOME HIVE OF GENESTEAERS AND HONOUR YOUR EMPEROR!!

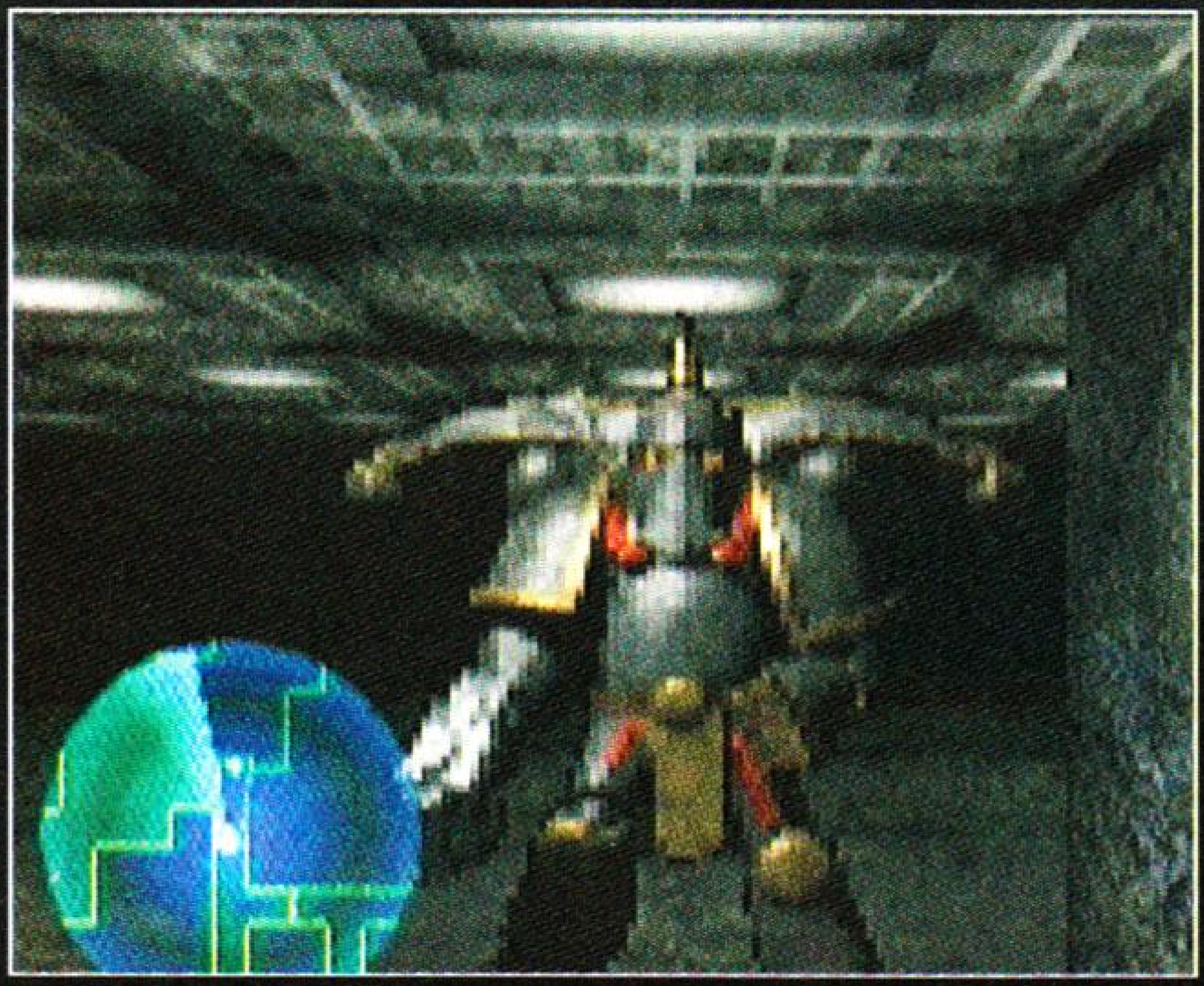


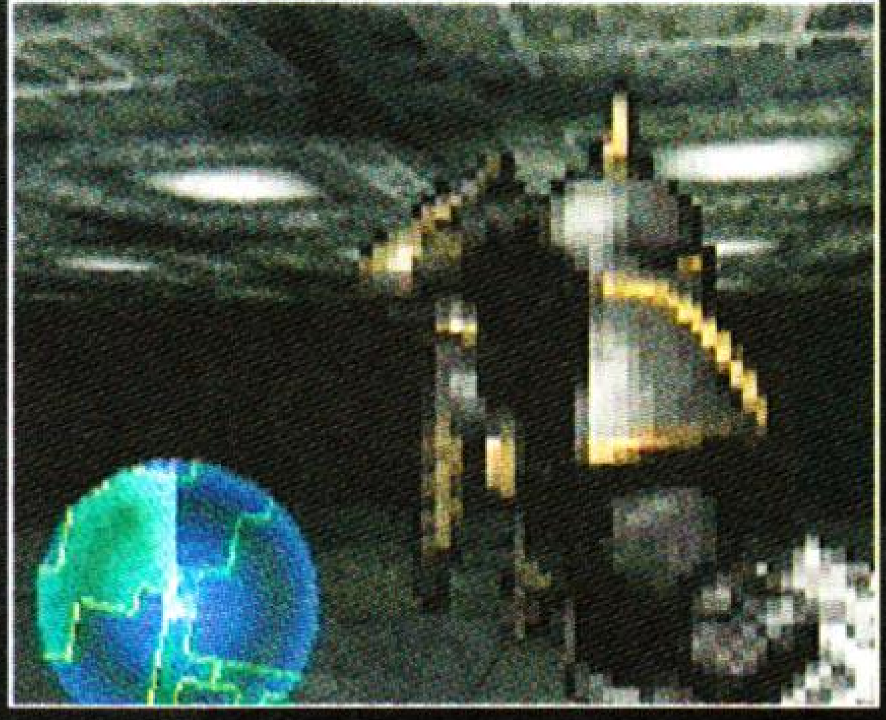
HYBRID GENESTEALERS - A HORRIFIC MISMATCH OF MAN AND MONSTER WITH KILLING CUNNING!

Second and third generation offspring from human and Genestealer reproductive atrocities become known in the hive as hybrids. They tend to the needs of the Magus or Patriarch whilst training themselves in the way of human warfare. A typical Hybrid is human-sized, but walks with a pronounced hunch and is covered in armour that hides some of the more foul mutations. Most hybrids support six appendages, but none have such sharp talons as those found on the Purestrains. Dressed in the dark blue garb of the hivemind with sunken but bulbous heads, these evil and wicked creatures have become increasingly (and dangerously) proficient in the art of gun control.

The the arena of combat, the Hybrid typically fires a few bursts of gunfire at you and runs for cover. A lumbering Terminator has little chance in keeping up with these flitting foes, so the best tactic is to wait for them to close in, and then bolter them to death. They never engage in hand-to-hand, preferring instead to strafe and run, but having only small amounts of armour, they are quite easily dispatched.

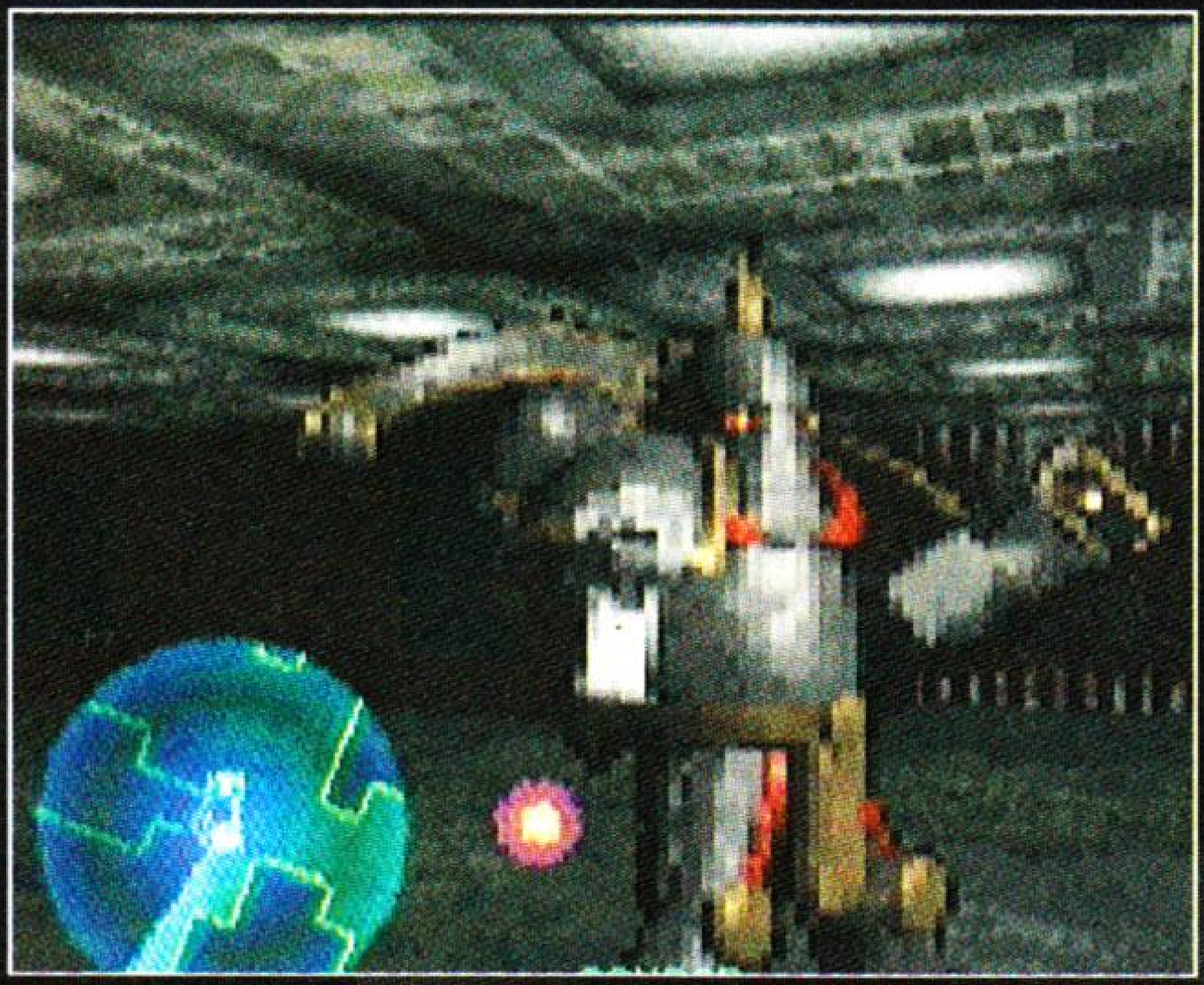






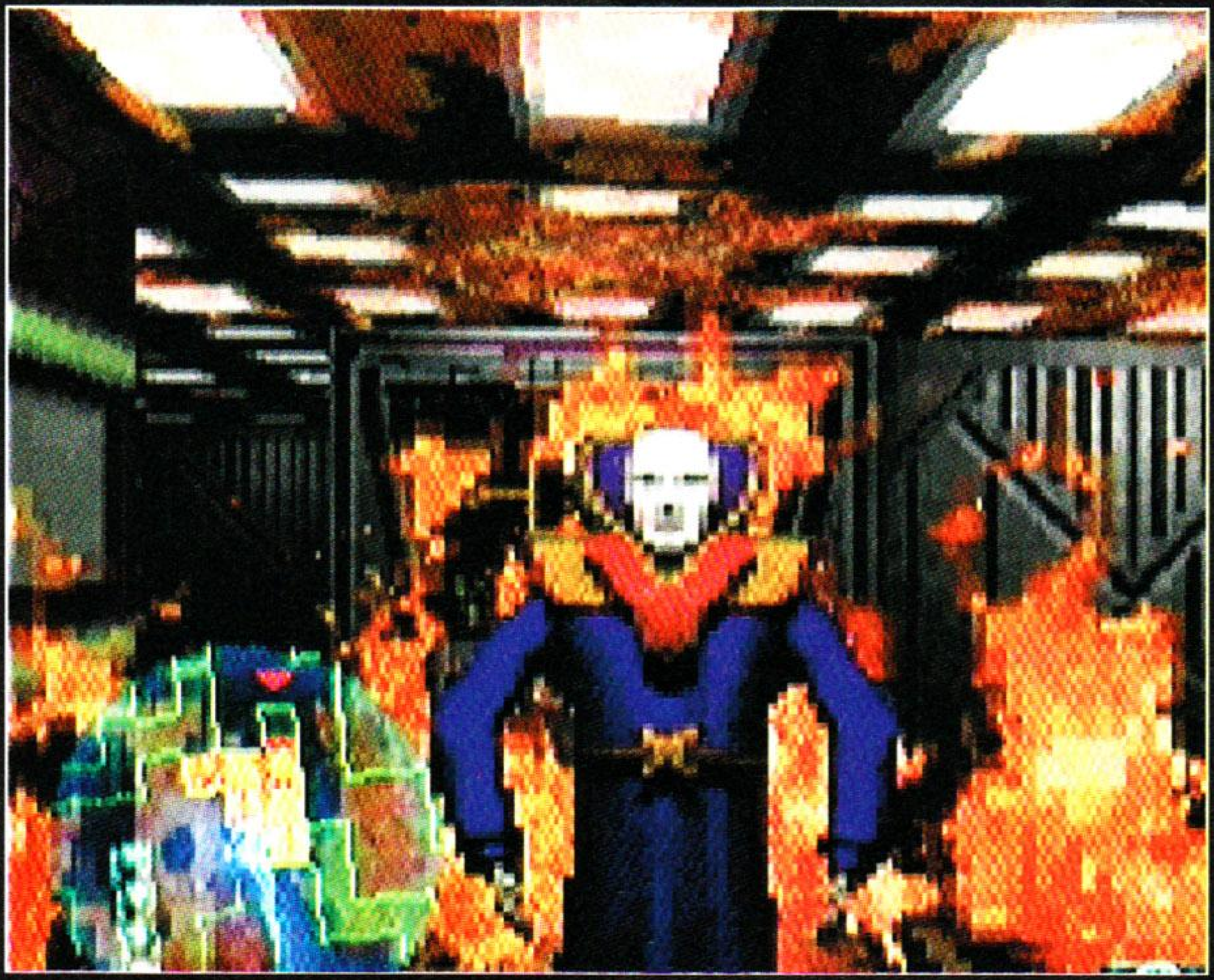
Face to face with one of the Chaos Marines. Fire your Bolter with grim determination and then hide to replenish your armour. These hideous inhuman marines shall fall!

CHAOS MARINES - THE SUFFOCATING FORCE OF EVIL HAS WARPED AND TWISTED FORMER HUMANS!



Ever since the titantic struggle between the Emperor and Warmaster Horus, there have been roving bands of Chaos Space Marines. The former right-hand man of the Emperor himself, Horus fell under the spell of Khorne the God of Chaos and summoned the might of his loyal marine chapters to aid him in his possessed struggle. The Emperor eventually overcome Horus, and destroyed both his physical and mental presence. However, the influence of Chaos still hung over Horus' faithful marine troops, who banded together into squadrons of roving pirates, worshipping Chaos whereever they gained a foothold.

Previous Terminator expeditions have reported seeing figures clad in dark powered armour, and it is believed by Imperial intelligence that the Space Hulk once housed a chapter of Chaos Space Marines. The marines are not wearing Tactical Dreadnought Armour, but are instead clad in less weighty powered armour, that should crumple beneath a Terminator onslaught. When you encounter a Chaos Marine, the tactic is extremely simple; blow it away immediately, and then recharge your energy fields. The Chaos Marine tends to fire at you almost immediately, and has slightly greater manoeuvrability than you, but with less protection. The only problem with Chaos Marines is encountering groups of them together in one section of a Hulk. Then your tactics should change to that of gunning a single marine and then hiding to recharge your Refractor Field. Kill these marines you must, as their pact with the Genestealers shows demonic impurity that must be stamped on, and hard.



Burn, Terminators, burn! Our rather scarey encounter with the Magus had our squad of Terminators legging it round corridors for ages before he made a mistake of insulting the Emperor himself. "Right, that's it!" we cried, " Flame on!"

"I AM THE MAGUS! I SHALL BURN YOUR SOULS!!"

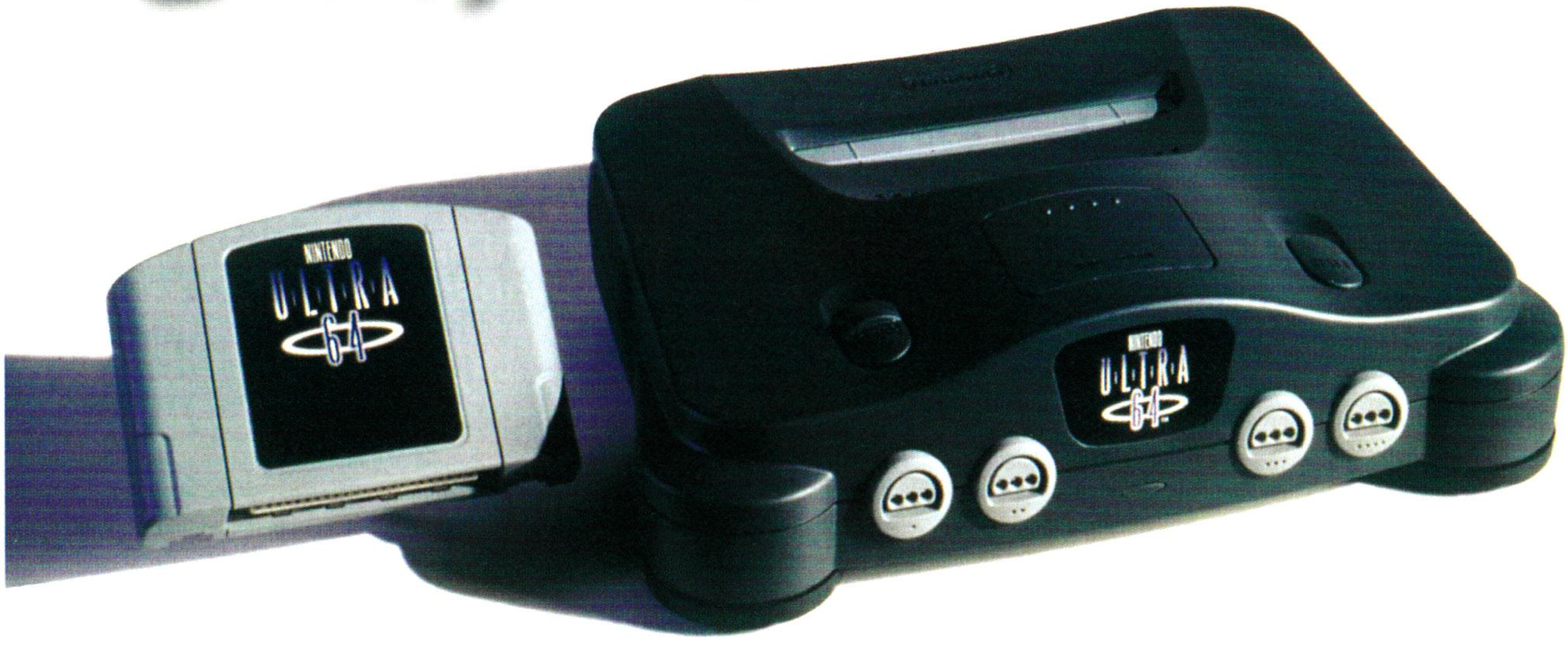
GENESTEALER MAGUS - THE HIVEMIND LEADER HAS PSYCHIC POWERS BEYOND COMPREHENSION!

At the heart of every Hivemind is the leader; known as the Magus. Other reports indicate a Patriarch may be present in this Space Hulk, but these are unconfirmed at present. What can be fathomed is that Imperial psykers report a humanoid Magus is with this Genestealer force, and must be eradicated to prevent further contamination. The Magus is a fourth or fifth generation hybrid with considerable psychic powers that become apparent in such Genestealers. A mauve skin pigment and sharp incisors are all that distinguishes the Magus from a human (apart, of course, from the company he keeps and the cowled robes of the Hivemind).

The Magus is capable of supreme psychic acts of confusion and illusion, and uses this power in one of three ways. Firstly, he can summon Hellfire, and psychic burst of supernatural energy that transforms a corridor into a blazing inferno that is even capable of melting Terminator armour. secondly, he has the ability to jinx various long range weapons that a Terminator possesses. A Storm Bolter or Assault Cannon may jam or fire wildy, whilst a marine foolish enough to employ a jinxed Flamer in the combat zone may suffer an extremely explosive fate. The Magus' final power is his teleportation ability which drains him of almost all his psychic energy, and this is saved for a final desperate escape.

The Magus is an enemy that needs to be experienced by the Space Hulk player before a killing strategy can be formed, so our advice is to approach with caution, and ignore his mocking laughter. With these tactics in mind, a thoughful and intelligent player may take his squad of Blood Angels through the catacombs of the foreboding Space Hulk to victory! The Emperor may yet smile upon you!

you can't buy this.



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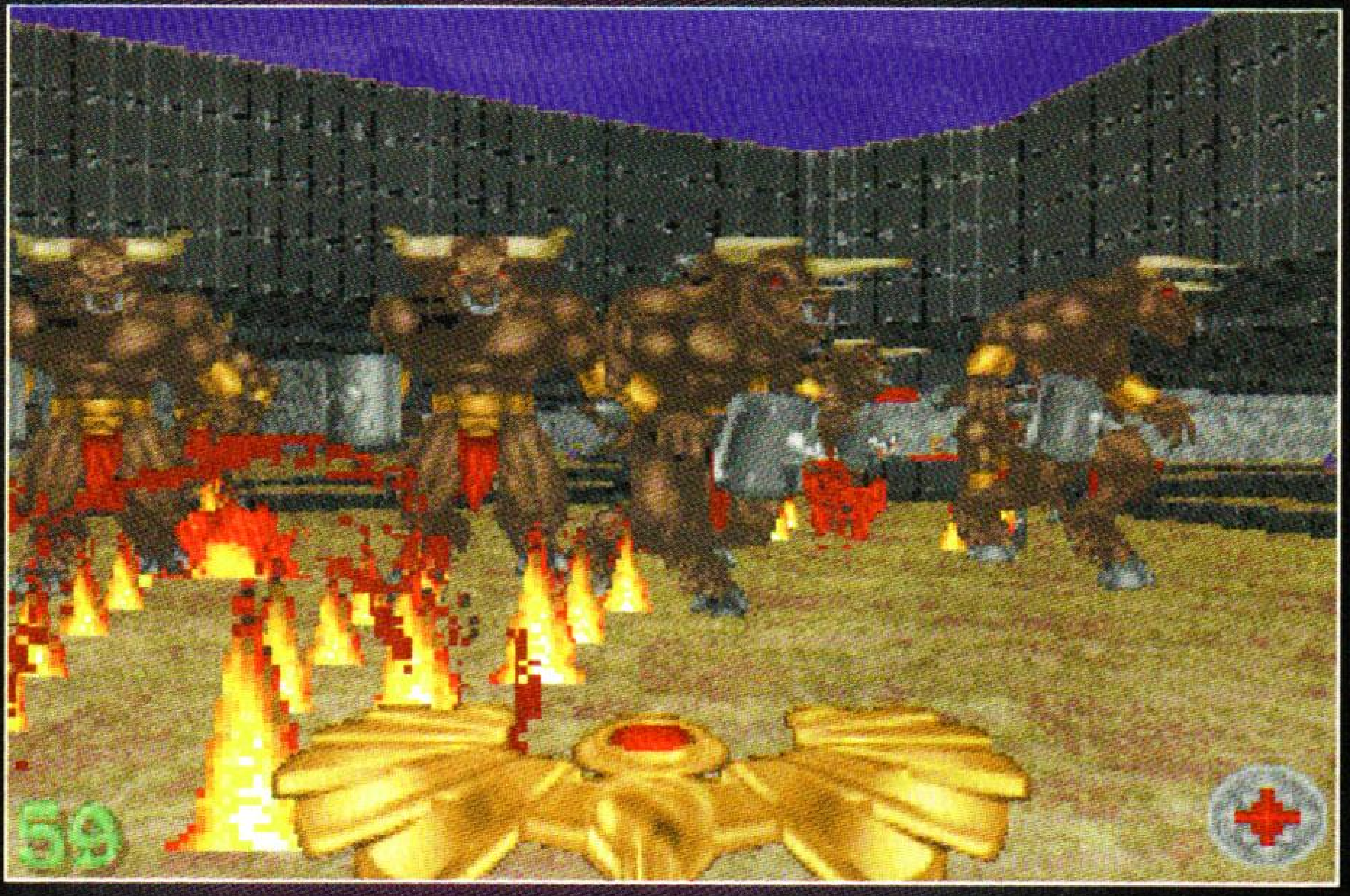
"It is written that three demons shall ride forth from the Eastern provinces. They shall be shrouded in cloaks and shall beguile the masses into indenture. Vile mooncalves shall be created by the three horrors, and the whole of the land shall twitch and squirm before them. The Elven flock shall rise to meet such evil and a fierce battle shall commence. Magical fire and unnatural incantations will be heard by those foolish enough to listen, and the struggle will continue until the death of the last Sidhe. Once this occurs, the eternal howling shall start, and the earth will be consumed from within. All will be lost in the fathomless chasm."

Latest version of HERETIC with two new chapters! Can you overcome the demonic curse of D'Sparil?

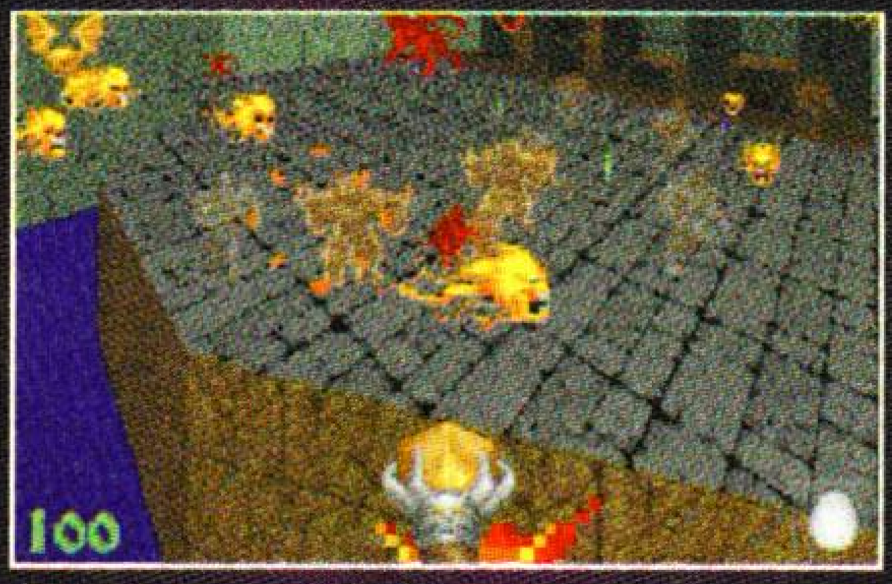


PC	RAVEN REVAMP A CLASSIC! **HERETIC**
RAVEN	AVAILABLE MARCH IN **UK** SHOPS

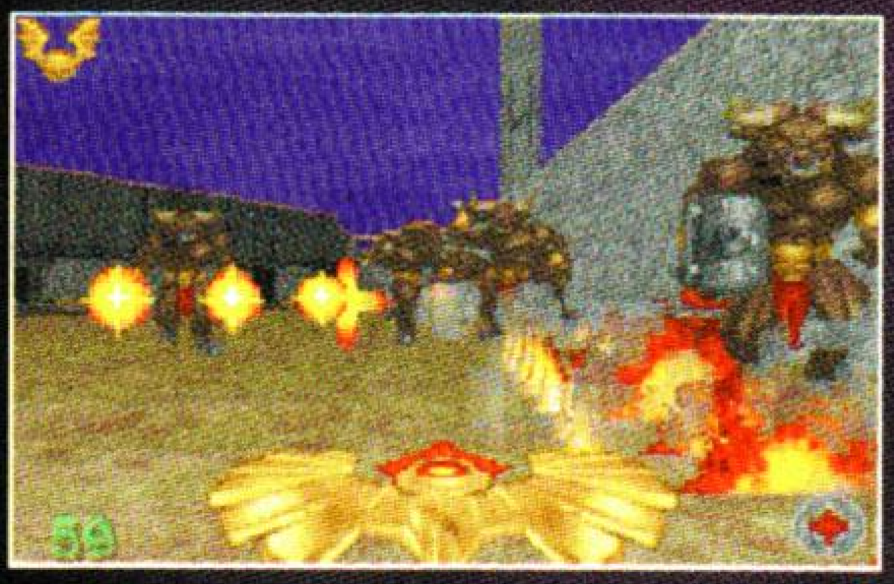
The Elder finished the tome of power and carefully placed it on the altar table. He rose to his feet and wrapped his cape about him, and reached for a flaming taper. Small arching pulses of electricity swarmed throughout the chamber as the last of the seven great candles were lit, and the final great army of the Earth was summoned. The magical reflections pulsing through your body signalled a great change for the whole world; a shift that all the Sidhe tribe of elves would never recover from...

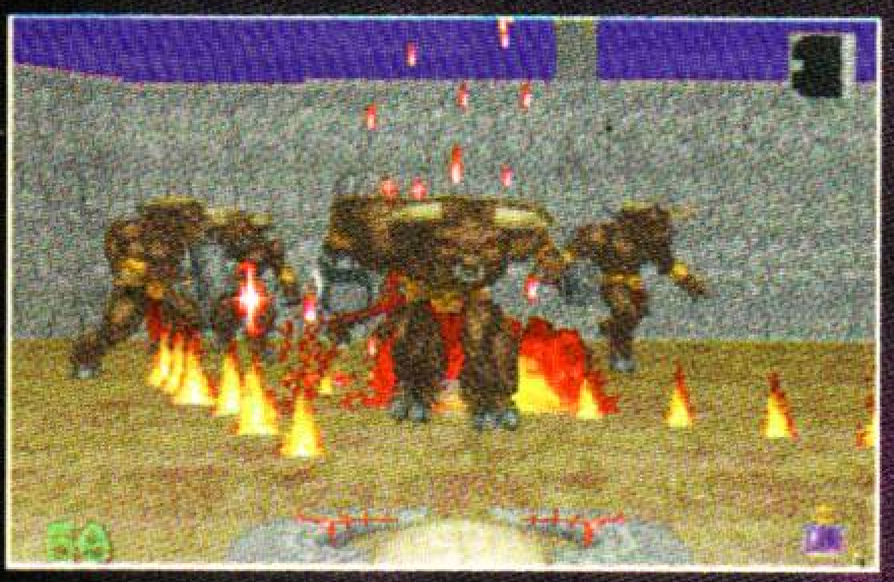
Sweeping through the Eastern territories came the sentinels of slaughter; the three Serpent Riders shrouded in a black mist of destruction. Riding their hideous steeds, these spectres glared at their victims through piercing red slits before tearing apart those who would not yield. The wicked three showed their immeasurable power by delivering peace to the Eastern lands, but at a terrible price. Millions were enslaved and prayed to their inhuman masters in temples that bore the sign of the crossed trident. These tribes were known as the Order of the Sign, and they grew in stature until even the seven great kings of the world followed with abashment. The nations fell to this unstoppable power; the followers lost all spirit, will and compassion, and finally the world trembled under a terrible new order. This quick conversion pleased the three dark spirits, and two of them journeyed onwards to other worlds, leaving the weakest rider, D'Sparil, to watch over their minions.

The final stage of the fourth chapter features one of the most difficult arenas ever seen in a Heretic level! Luckly, our hero was equipped with the Wings of Wrath, and thus could survey the scene of carnage whilst he decided what to do.

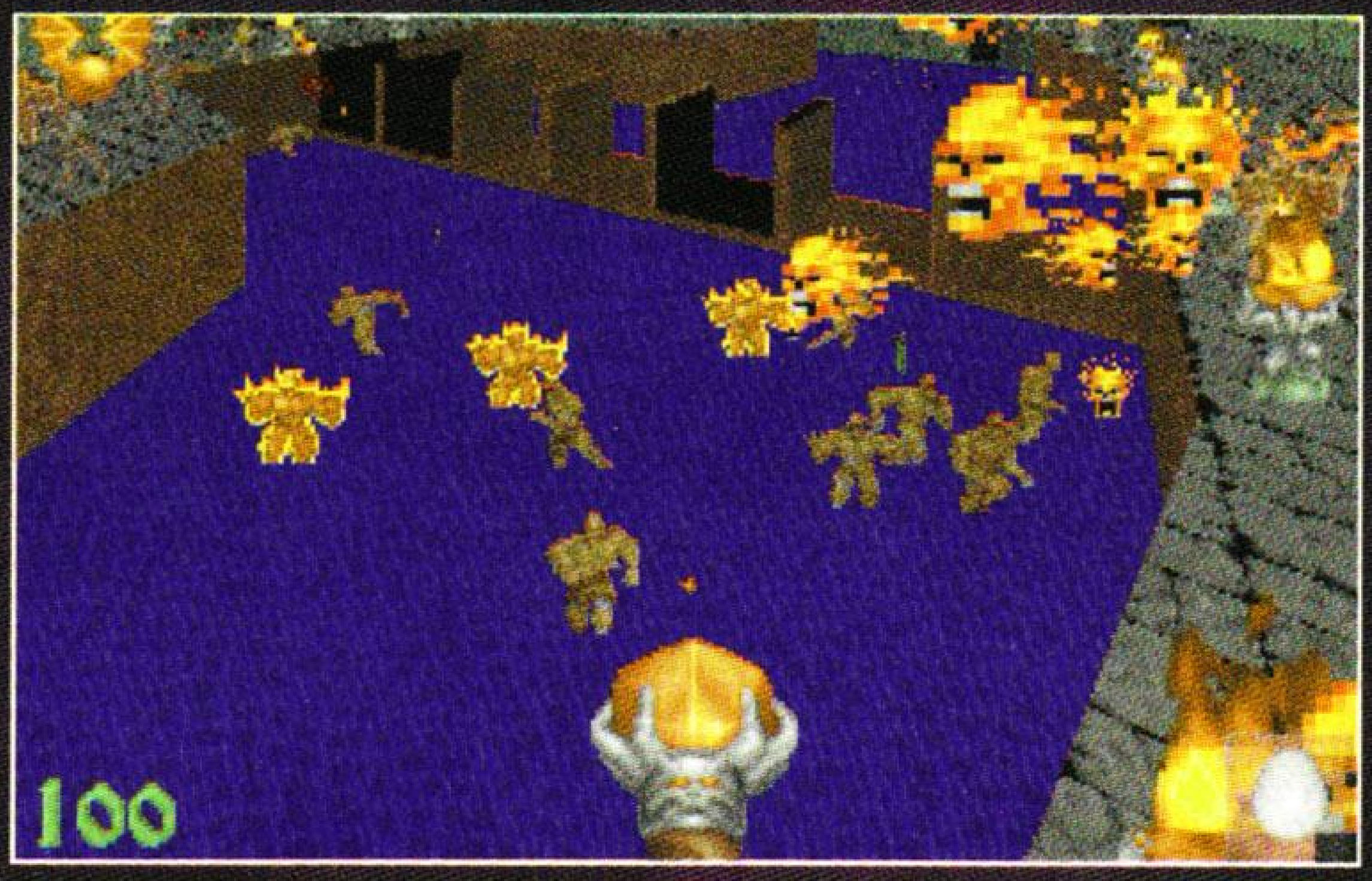


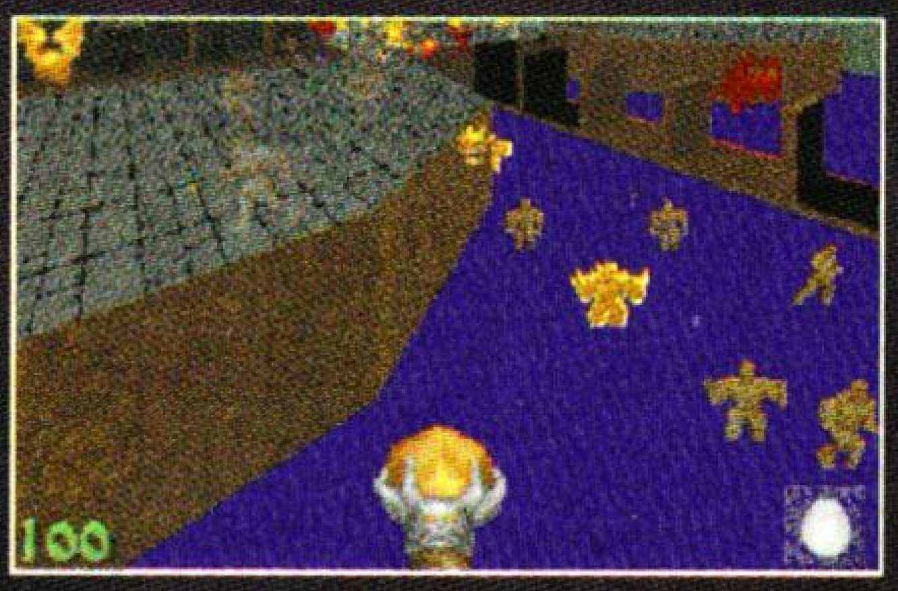
MORE MAMMOTH MEDIAEVAL MELEE WITH MASSIVE MONSTERS TO MASSACRE! ADVENTURE THROUGH FIVE WHOPPING CHAPTERS! FORTY FIVE FRENETIC FEAR-FILLED STAGES!





Maulotaur rampage! One of the final levels of Heretic pits you against an unbelievable number of baying bloodthirsty bovine mutations! Charge up your finest artifacts and prepare for some heavy pummelling!

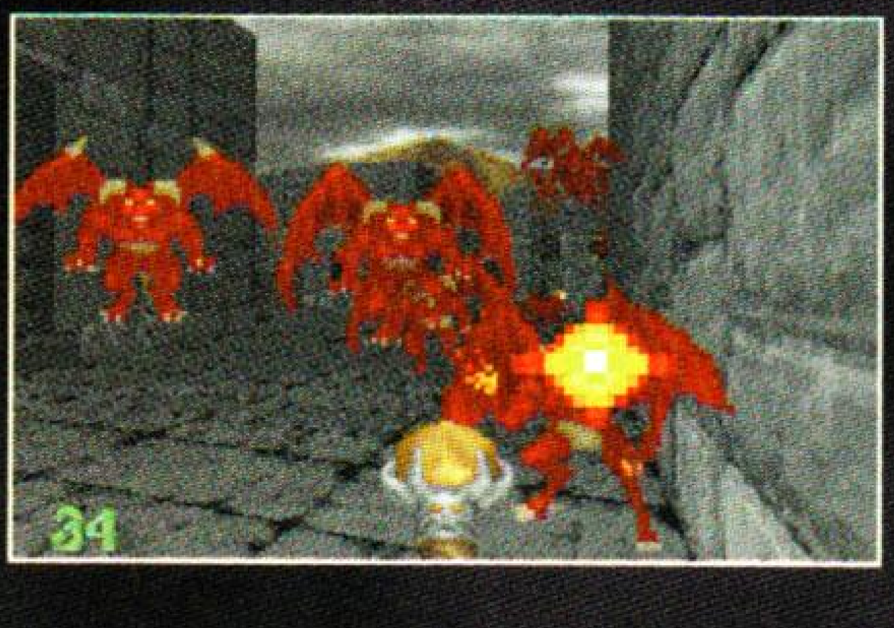




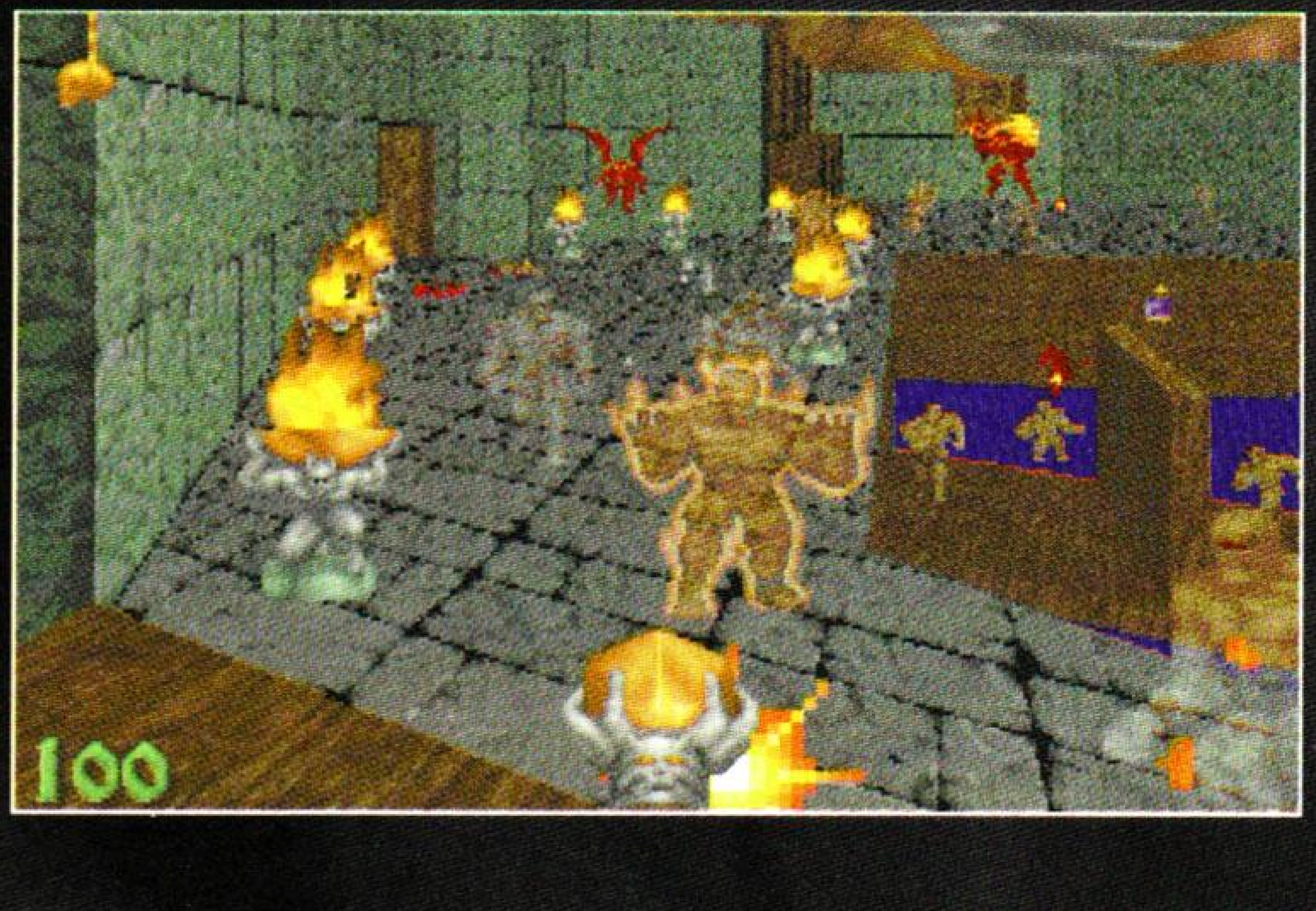
Only the elven folk of the magically charged Sidhe tribe remain unaffected by this fearful curse, as their mystical incantations saved them from mind-slavery. The rest of the possessed population considered the few Sidhe elves to be Heretical lepers, and rose up to dispatch them from the Earth. With the seven great armies swearing undying loyalty to D'Sparil, your Elders quickly congregated to deliberate the destiny of your people. The many wise and powerful sages spoke of their fear, and it was decided to snuff the flames of the seven great candles. The eldest magicians entered a rhythmic trance, muttering conjurations before a final supernatural gust of chilled wind extinguished all light from the chamber. At that instant, the gathering armies of the new Order that were approaching from the East disappeared in a flash of brilliant white light, and the battlefields erupted with a green fire, consuming the troops and their evil Kings.With relief, your Elven leaders collapsed, drained of all magical energy.

The strongest fighter of Sidhe tribe stepped forward to carry them away, and a shriek of pure evil filled the air; a portal opened in the summoning chamber. An accompanying dark red flame danced and darted the sacred halls as foul mutations spilled into every hidden cubbyhole. Great abominations tore through the elderly Sidhe, devouring them whilst the warrior watched helplessly with horror. The air became thick with the stench of death, and a mist of blood hindered all that attempted to escape. This fighter ran from the sacred halls and watched with dismay as the fabled forest citadel crumbled into the earth before being engulfed in a huge gout of red fire. As the plume of crimson smoke dissipated, the hated image of D'Sparil appeared in the red clouds, mocking the warrior's attempts to destroy his reign of evil. The tribe of Sidhe had ceased to be.

DAMAGE AND DESTROY THE DEADLY DEMONS OF D'SPARIL!!



An angry contingent of Gaygoyles threaten to snuff out your lifeforce with their constant flying attacks and fireballs. Select the crossbow and fry them!



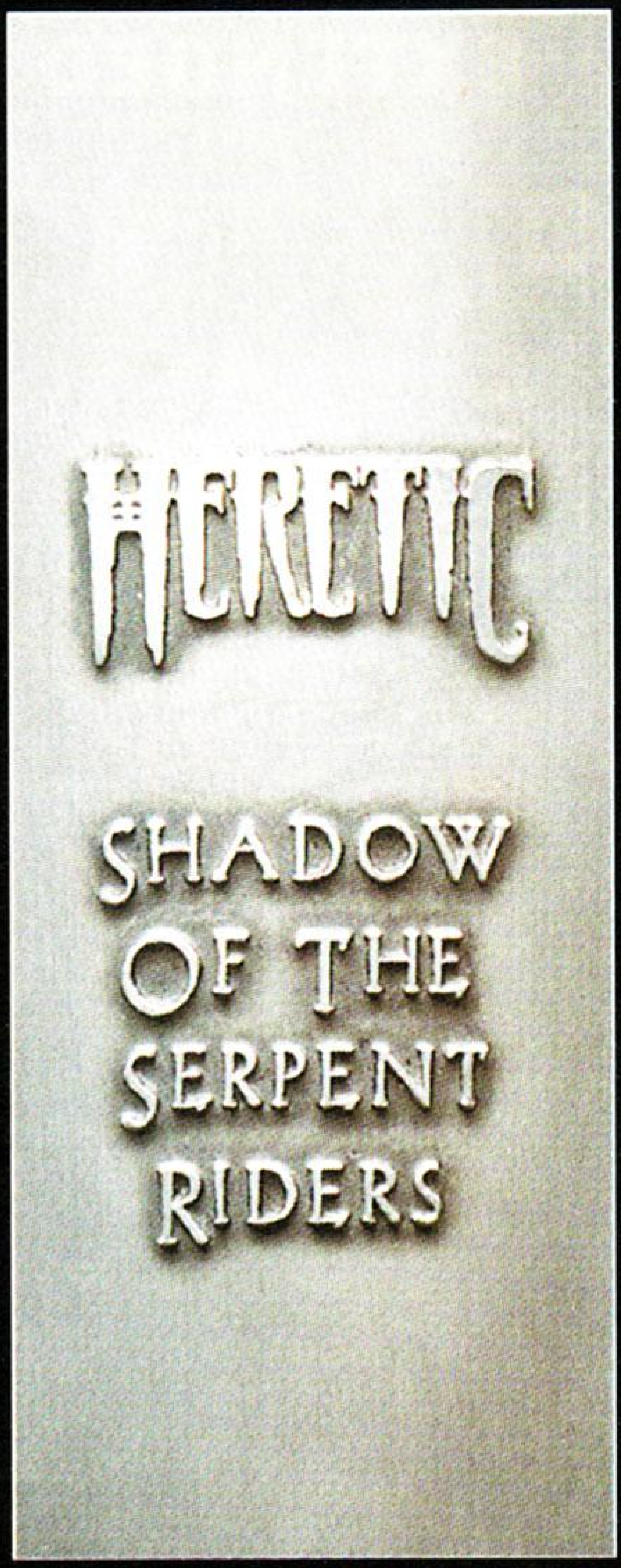
While the remnants of the warrior's once proud tribe vanished into the forests to wait for a long and painful death, his anger and hatred built up inside him, and drove him to his destiny. He rode to the East, in search of D'Sparil's heavily fortified stronghold, and waited for a chance to flit inside. Creeping past the border guards, he stopped in his tracks, staring at an immense and decaying fortress. This was the City of the Damned, and the atmosphere was dense with the decaying fetor of death. The inhabitants were now little more than gibbering fools, and had lost all traces of humanity, whilst the interior of the city housed unimaginable conjurations from the pit of D'Sparil's tortured mind. This cowled fighter carried a solid oak staff as his weapon, along with a finely-tuned Elven wand, and prayed

that some of the tribe's ancient and powerful artifacts lay scattered and hidden inside this immense complex. The fate of Earth rested on his shoulders, and his quest was to be hellishly difficult...

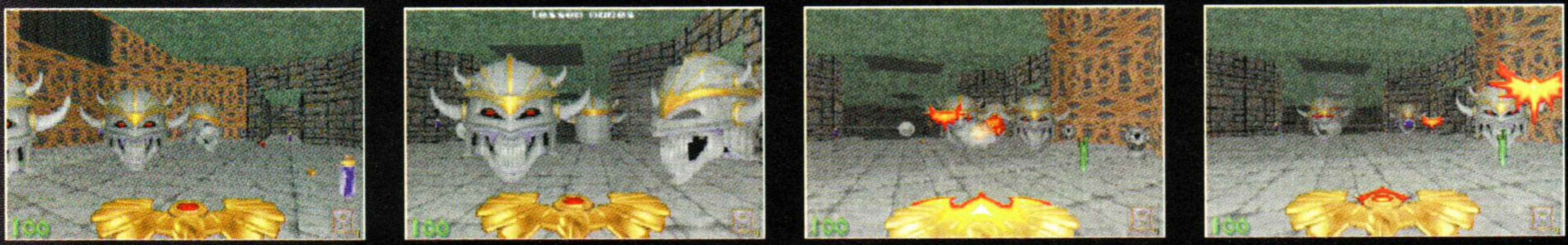
UK GAMERS RECEIVE THE FINEST VERSION OF HERETIC EVER KNOWN TO MAN!

Despite Hexen arriving more than three months ago, GT Interactive have decided to finally release a full version of the game's predecessor; Heretic. The reasons for this are simple: Firstly, the game has never received an official release in this country, and this gave GT the chance to keep their wave of 3D exploration titles flowing along. This official version of the game has another excellent feature that **MAXIMUM** applauds; the inclusion of two new chapters in the ongoing struggle between the Sidhe and D'Sparil, and these extra adventures bring extra longevity to an already expansive title. Not only are these levels complex and large (thus bringing another eighteen supremely designed cunning arenas for the UK gamer), but are designed to appeal to those hack-and-slay fanatics that have recently completed Hexen. These new chapters are designed with the expert player in mind and it shows; nowhere will you find such a cavalcade of carnage with mountains of monsters to maul in the most grotesque ways possible!

All of the levels follow a similar pattern, with the adventurer locating an exit after collecting a number of keys and flicking numerous switches. Of course, there is a variety of traps and secrets to discover on each of the levels, but the basic premise remains the same throughout the whole of the game. As the vast majority of gamers are well-versed in the ways of 3D hackathons (such as Doom), **MAXIMUM** has dispensed with a level guide and has decided to detail the favourable aspects of the weaponry available. Heretic's weapons are unique and offer much entertainment, but which ones are most useful?



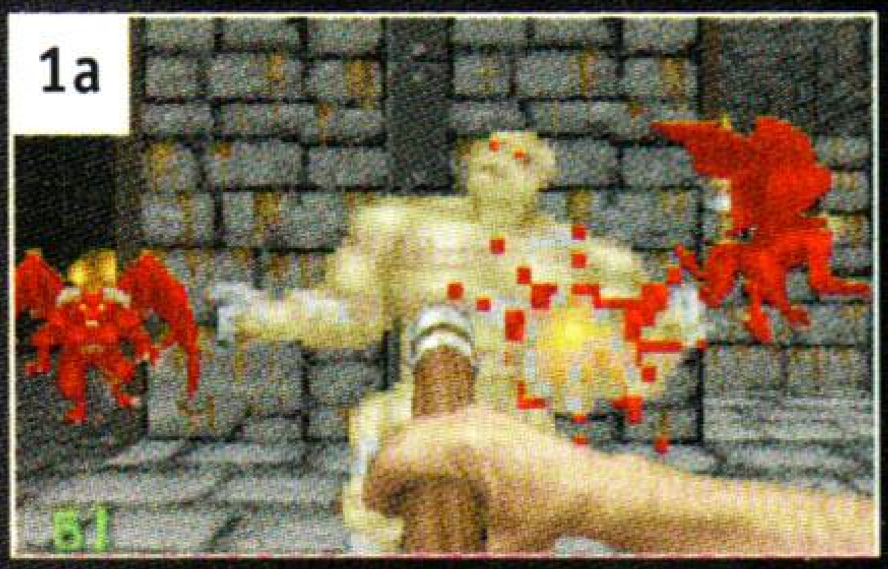
A HERO STEPS FORWARD... A HUSH DESCENDS AND ALL MUTTERINGS CEASE. WHO WILL SAVE THE WORLD FROM EVIL? A LONE AND SIMPLE ELF KNOWN BY HIS FIGHTING NAME... HE IS SPARTAK THE DESTROYER!!



Tromping through one of the early levels of the fourth chapter, Spartak was surprised to find a triple helping of horned skull demons. With multi-layered fireballs and a dreaded whirlwind attack, these horrors from hell charged forward and a heavy bout of concentrated bloodlust began in earnest!

When tromping through the vast number of levels present in Heretic (45 at the last count), MAXIMUM relied on the exploits of a battle-hardened veteran to see them through the game. This lumbering warrior is more than a match for any Maulotaur, to such an extent that we throw down the gauntlet and challenge any player to compete with Spartak the Destroyer in the combat zone! Once his mammoth trek was completed, Spartak agreed to test some of the game's more potent weapons, and offer his own personal comments on each one.

1a



1b

Paf! The staff of the Sidhe is being employed here to ward off an advancing Golem. Only use it as a last resort.

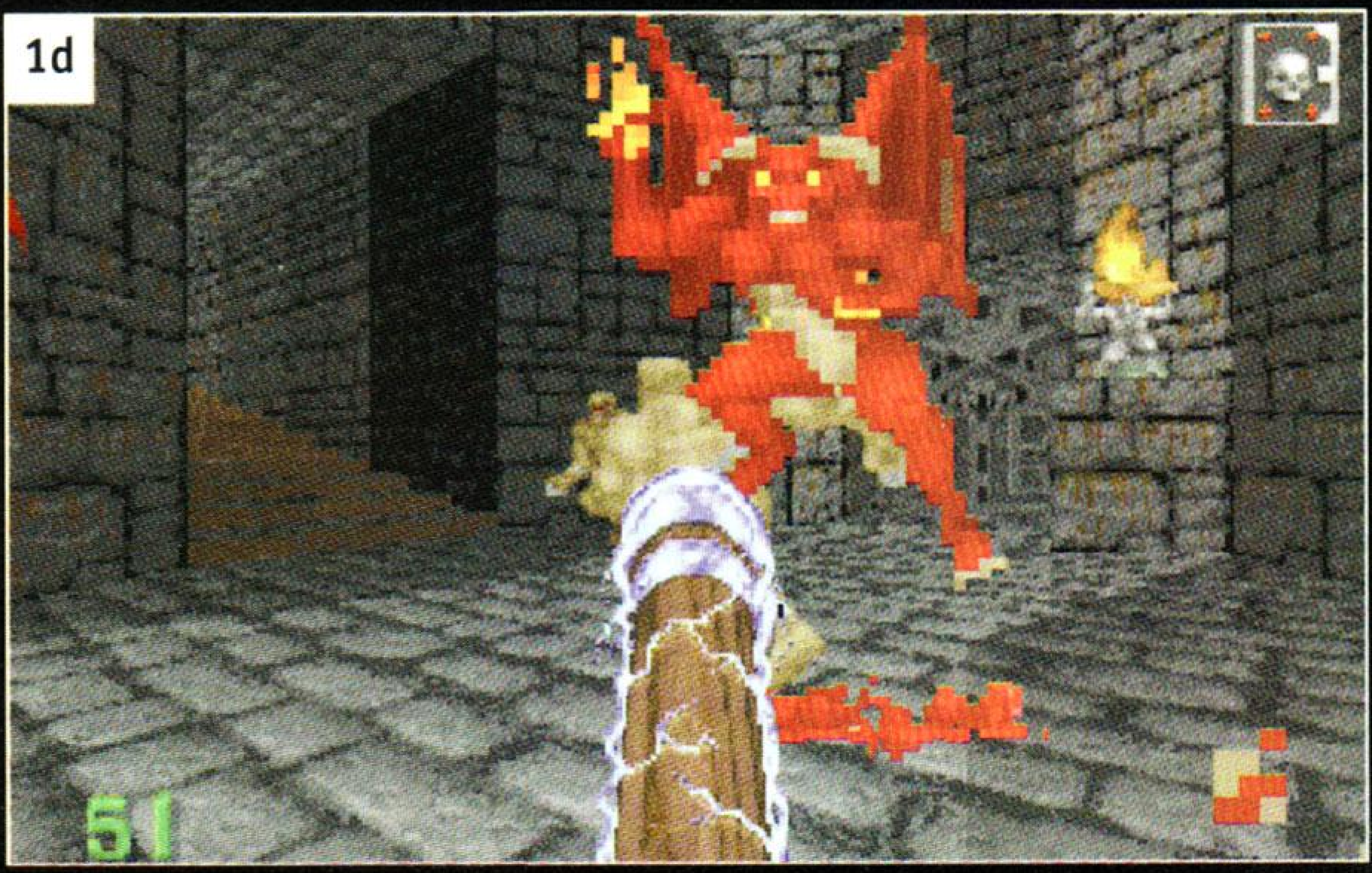
SPARTAK'S WEAPONS GUIDE

PART ONE: CLOSE COMBAT CARNAGE!

"My weapons of war bring me unimaginable power! My people have hidden them in the most sacred places, and only I, Spartak, have the necessary skill and guile to locate them! By the beard of Archdeacon Stabbator, I shall wreak havoc throughout the lands of D'Sparil, hated enemy of my people. Tremble D'Sparil, and remember my cries of rage!"

The mighty Spartak is able to carry up to eight death-dealing weapons of ultimate destruction in his continuing quest to rid the world of evil. During these mammoth travels, Spartak has formed his own opinions about the usefulness of such weaponry, and his sage advice has been sought when formulating the following hints and tips for making the most out of your artifacts. Let us begin...

1d

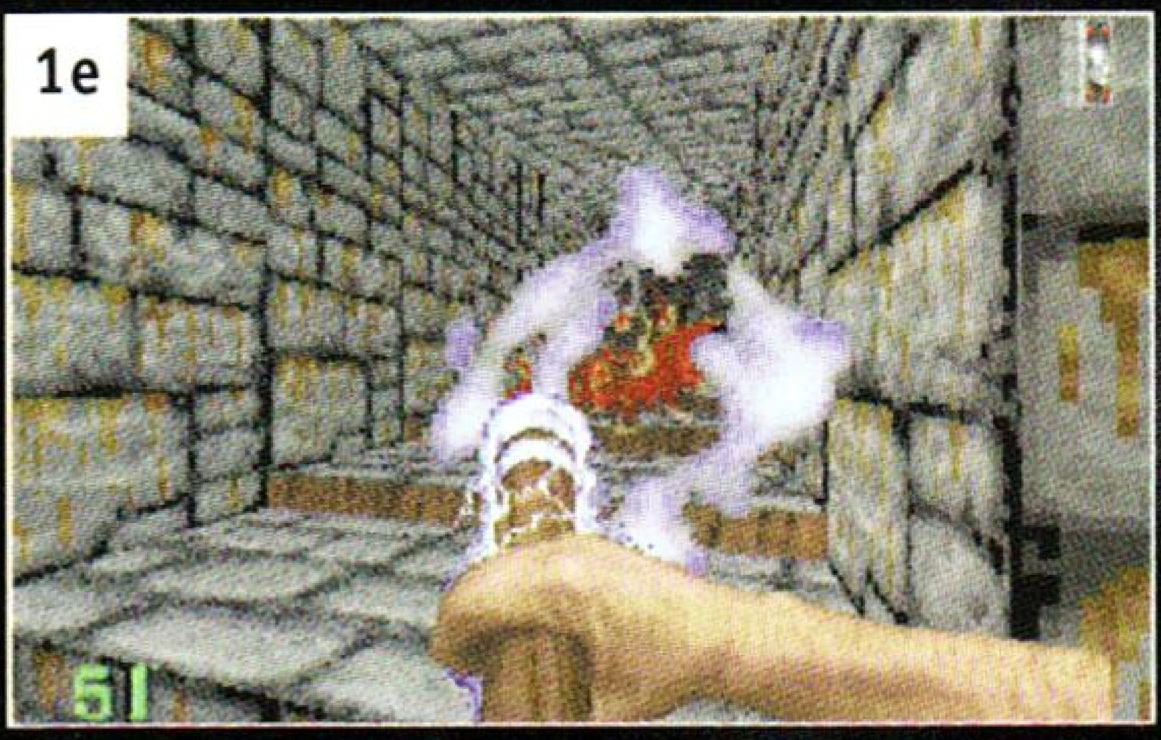


1 STAFF - Spartak laughed long and low when quizzed about the effectiveness of this long oak branch. Unperturbed, we took the staff on a test run, and found it (as was suspected) to be of very little use at all. The Staff is slow to inflict damage, and even the weakest creatures (such as Gargoyles) have to be battered two or three times before they fall. This is one weapon that should be stowed safely away in a bag of holding, and only brought to bear in the direst of situations. Save it for prodding a small and single enemy when you want to conserve ammo.

Seeing the disgruntled look on Spartak's visage, we calmed him down before offering him a special bonus; the chance to take on an elderly Golem with a special powered-up version of the staff. He grinned a manic (and toothless) smile when we read from the Tome of Power, remarking that the writhing blue energy that now wrapped the weapon was very much to his liking. Then he prodded the protesting Golem and it exploded in a gout of blue flame! This suped-up pole is as effectual as the Gauntlets, and does tend to clear a room of low-level entities, but given the scarcity of the Tomes needed to power the weapon (and the preference for powering the ranged artifacts), this is unlikely to be employed unless under the direst of circumstances.

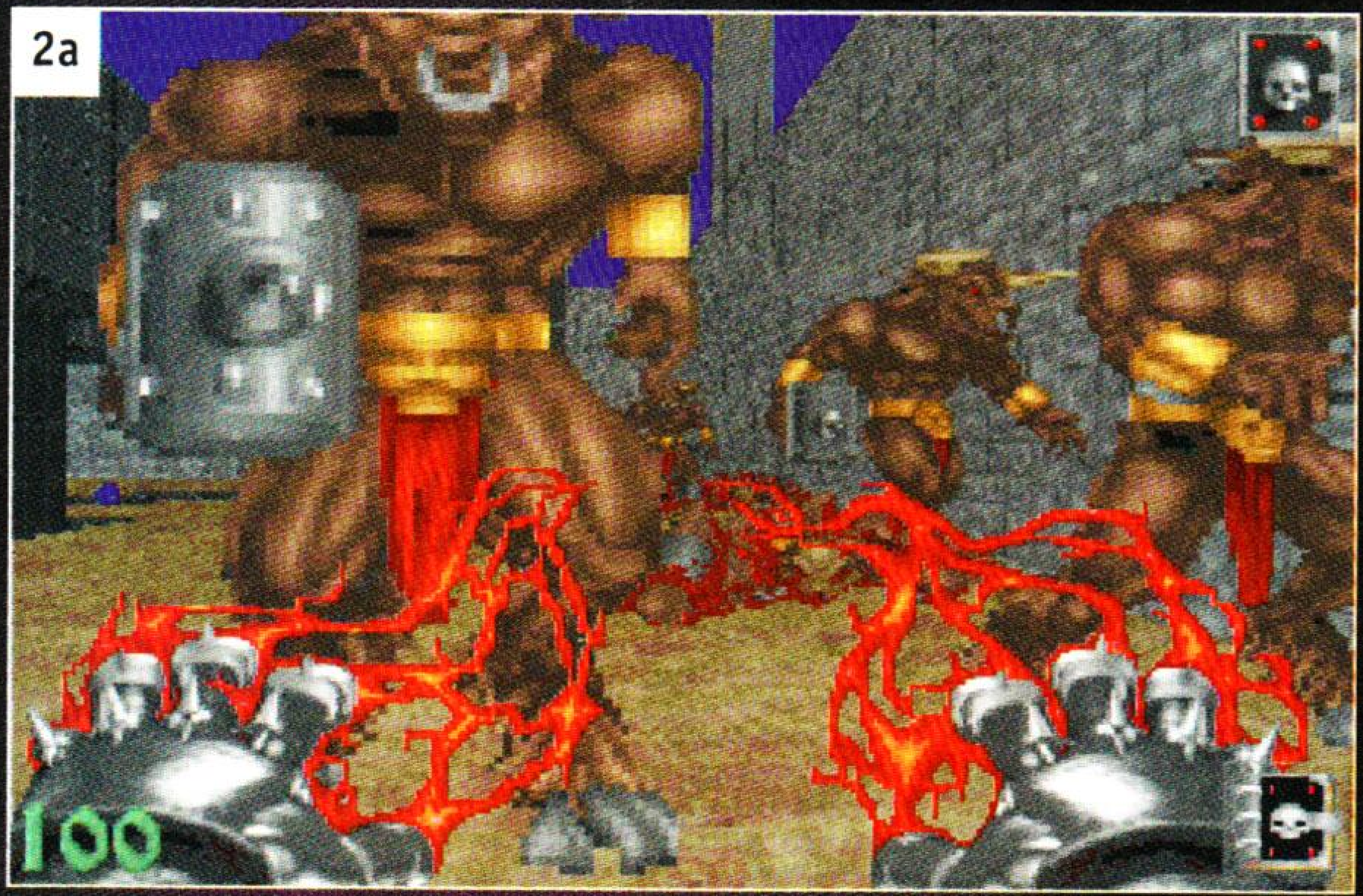
1c

1e



The powered Staff is a lot more dangerous to the servants of D'Sparil. However, it is wise never waste a Tome in this way.

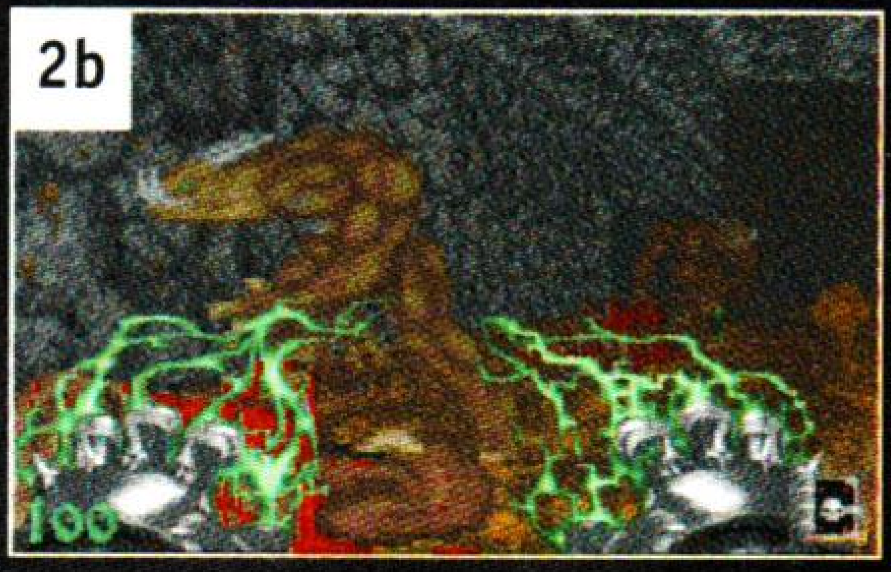
2a



2 GAUNTLETS - The Gauntlets, on the other hand, proved to be much more entertaining. Although never becoming more than an amusing interlude to the carnage ahead, Spartak was more than impressed with the quality of workmanship in these magical metal gloves. "You can pummel a foe into a thousand tiny pieces and then stomp on them to show your dissatisfaction!" he beamed, wading through the piles of offal and gore he created when asked to demonstrate. Spartak was particularly excited with the "pretty green sparks" of magical fire that darted about the gloves and lit up the walls around him. He explained that once locked in a furious grapple, a victim usually yields after three or four seconds. Obviously, ground-based creatures should only be grappled with, and this melee should ideally take place in the confines of a corridor or small anti-chamber.

We then handed our ham-fisted hero the fabled Tome of Power, and asked him to read from it whilst wearing the gloves before setting him loose in another monster-filled chamber. Roars of delight echoed around the citadel we were tramping through as he yelled "by the Gods, my power is unimaginable!", and tore through eight Weredragons with ease. We learned from this combat performance appraisal that the Gauntlets make excellent hand-to-hand combat weapons when charged with extra energy. Spartak marvelled at the red flickering fire now emanating from the gloves, and found that almost any foe was destroyed when these were employed. For close range carnage with many foes in a confined space, the combat gauntlets are the choice for any adventurer worth his salt. But as Spartak himself reminded us; "try not not let these foul fiends surround you my chums, or all will be lost!"

2b



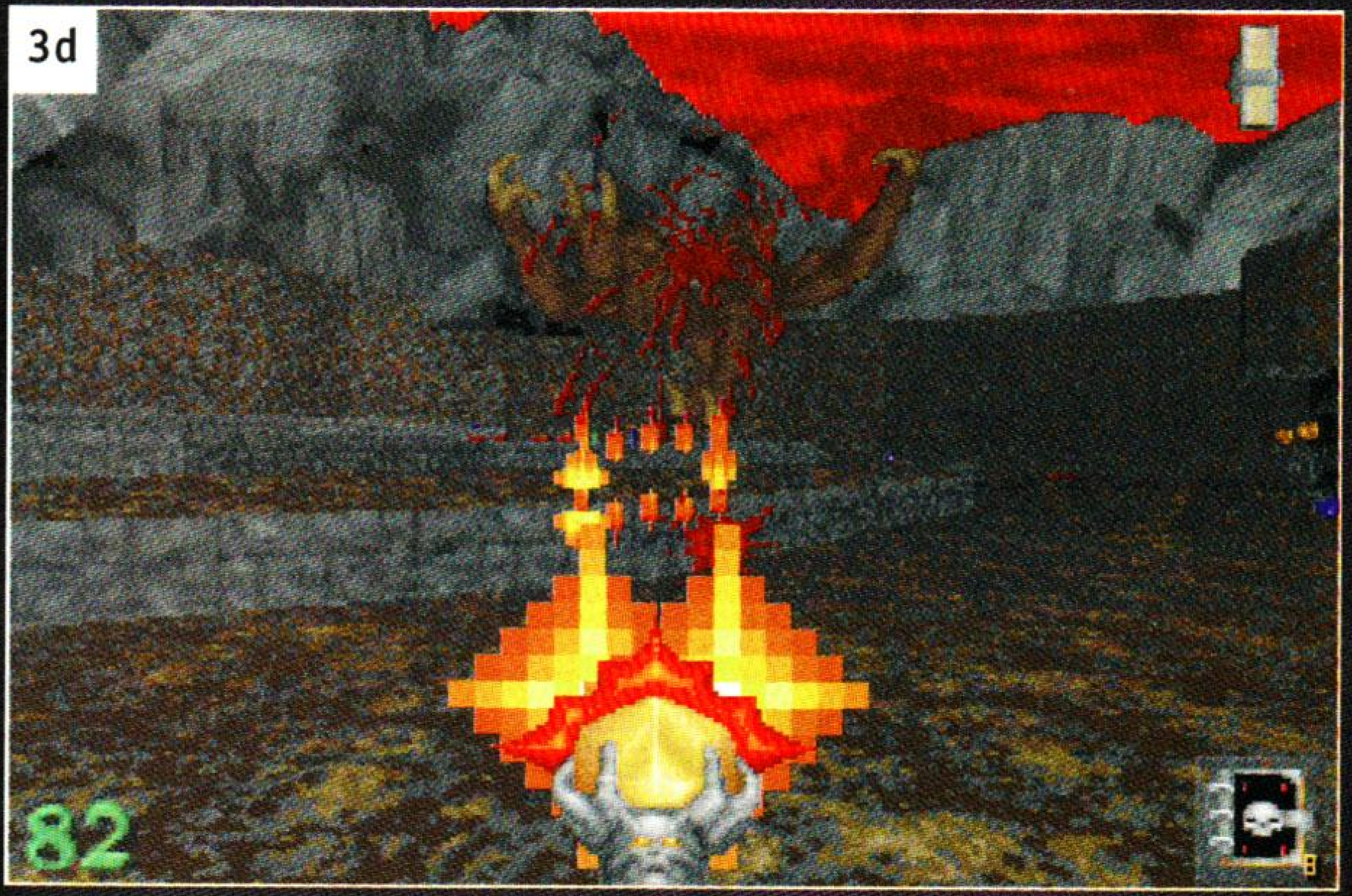
2c

We sent Spartak the destroyer down to investigate the mysterious crypts of Thrannakak armed only with a pair of metal gloves. Naturally, he was less than impressed until we showed him the ancient electricity surge of Throngar. This powered his gauntlets with magical energy, and he tore through his foes!

"LET THE WHOLE WORLD REMEMBER MY HIDEOUS BATTLE CRIES! I AM SPARTAK THE MAGNIFICENT!! THE WEAPONS OF MY PEOPLE PROVIDE ME WITH POWER BEYOND IMAGINATION!! PREPARE FOR MID-RANGED MAYHEM!"

3 ELVENWAND - Moving further into our test site (a sprawling citadel located in Thartak province), we presented Spartak with a small golden wand inscribed with ancient symbols of his people. He examined it closely, noting the entwined dragons embossed along the shaft before clutching it tightly, and stomping off into an unexplored area. Minutes later, he returned and complained bitterly at the lack of power contained in the yellow gem. The wand itself failed to perform well in the combat zone, and a bruised Spartak commented that the small shards of magical energy were too ineffectual to be of much use against anything stronger than a Golem. Greater weaponry is needed to be located with extreme haste, as the Elvenwand's magical darts take ages to whittle down a foe. The wand is good enough for dispatching two or three Gargoyles from a distance, but fails to perform well under any other circumstances. Spartak's tip was to start adventuring with the Elvenwand before scouring the land for a better weapon (such as any of the ones listed below).

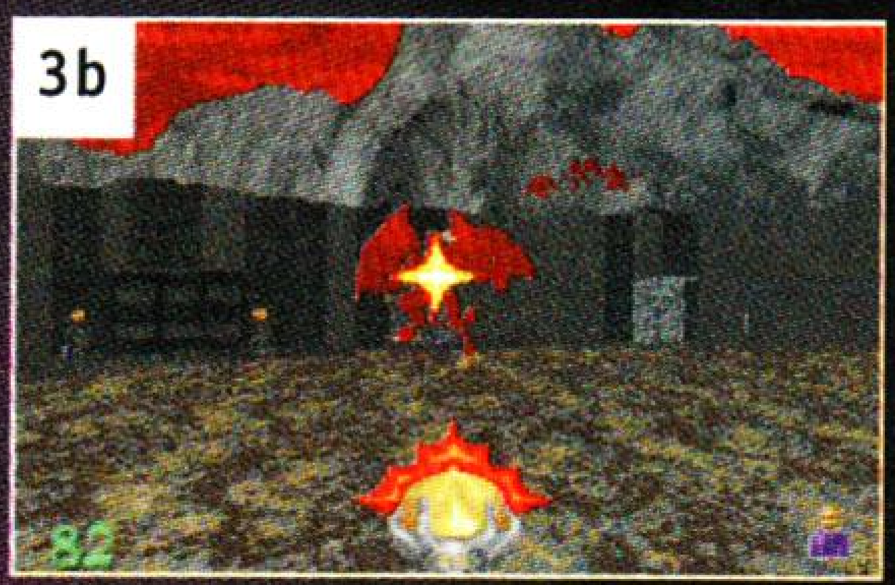
3d



Whoooph! A snarling minion of D'Sparil feels the full force of a powered-up Elvenwand. Instead of the phutting energy of the normal weapon, the Tome's supernatural force gives the user a multiple burst of larger yellow fireballs in a wider arch. This allows two enemies to be attacked at once, which pleased Spartak no end.

3a

3b



The spirit of an undead Golem is dispatched to the lowest plane of Hell (above). When Spartak could only use this item, he employed an excellent tactic of backpedalling whilst 'plinking' furiously at the enemy!

3c

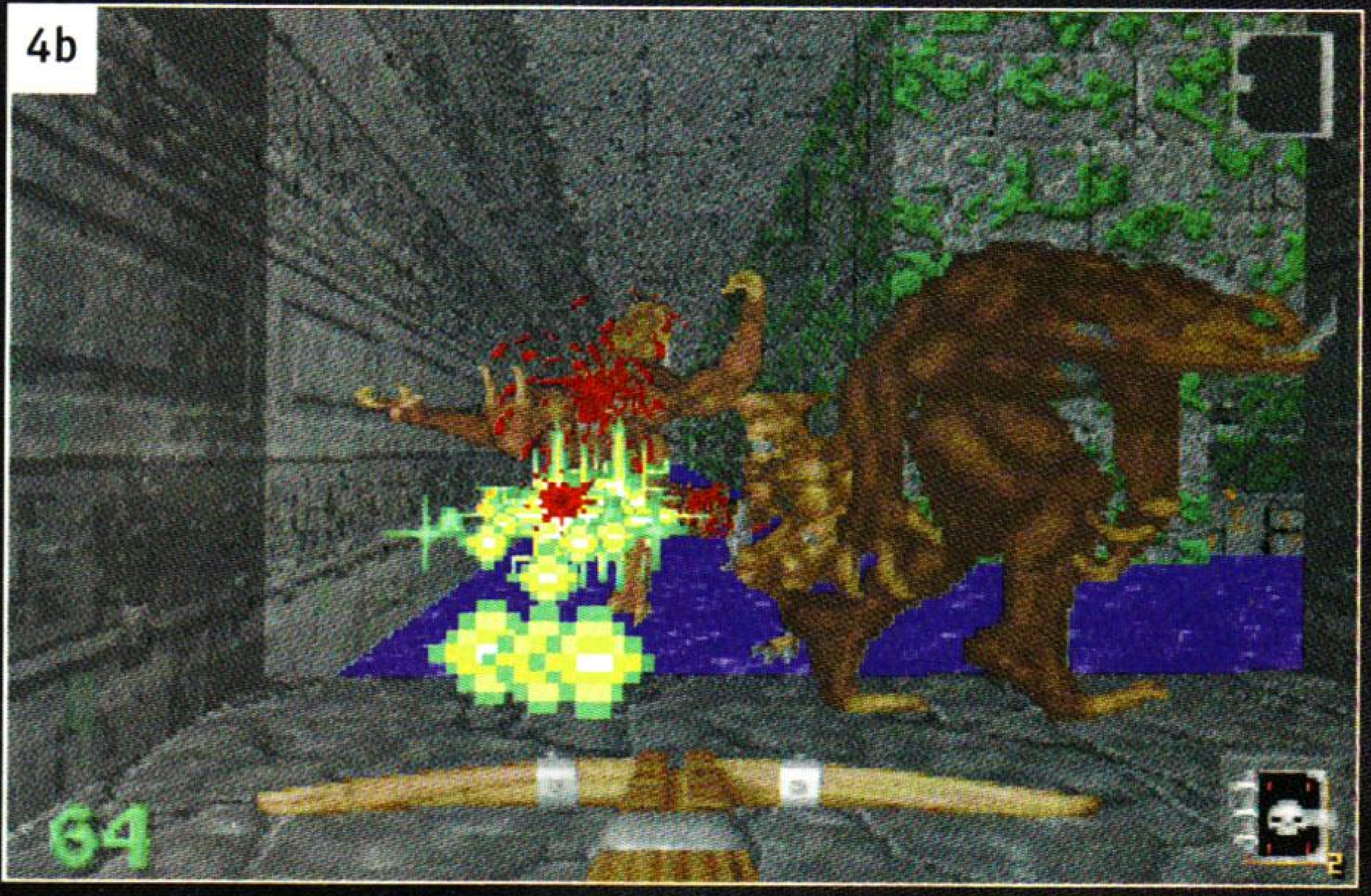
However, the mighty adventurer's face lit up when we suggested a brief incantation from the Tome of Power. Huge shards of arching energy lit up the Elvenwand with magical flame, and Spartak edged forward before disappearing into the darkness. What we heard next can only be described as gruesome, and shortly afterwards, Spartak emerged, claiming that "the enemy was disembowelled and slain with extreme haste in a myriad of golden light!" We took a closer look, and found this to be true, as the powered version of the Elvenwand hits the foe with gouts of yellow flame, and can take down a reasonably tough monster in a matter of seconds. This is essentially a ranged version of the powered-up gauntlets as it inflicts similar damage but has the extra benefit of keeping monsters at a distance. Impressive to watch, but not really worth losing a fabled Tome of Power to power up.

4a

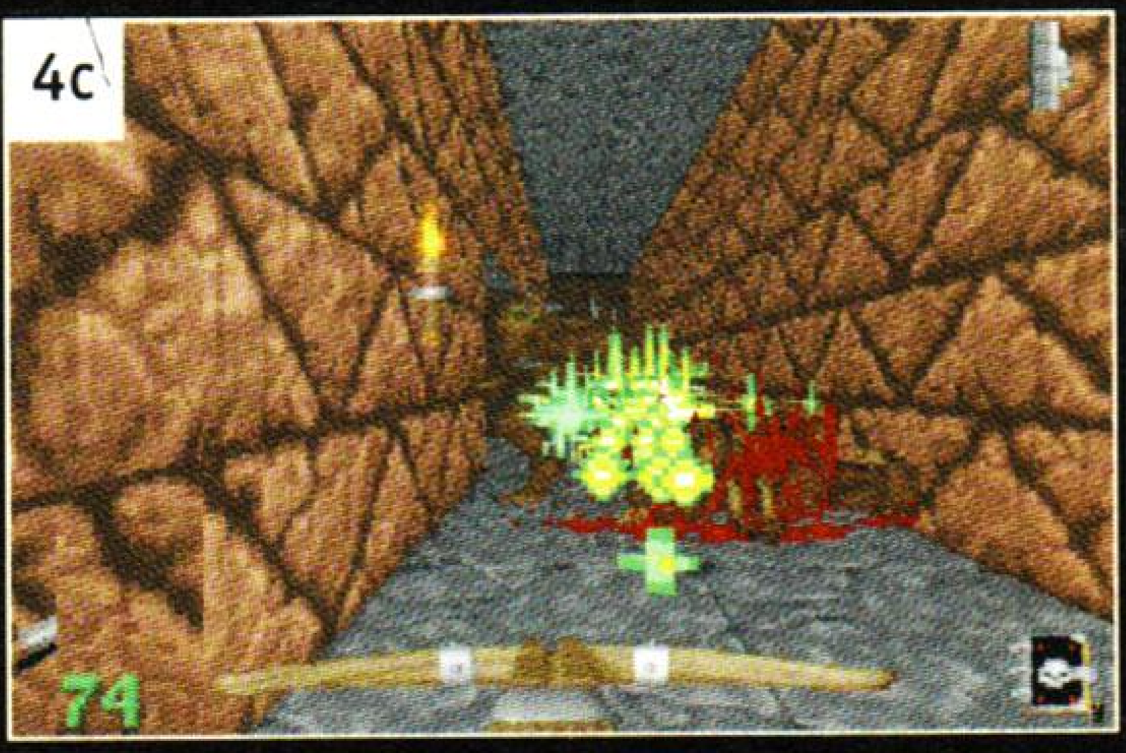
As long as they were kept at range, the swiping Sabreclaws proved to be little threat to our hero, as this picture demonstrates (above)

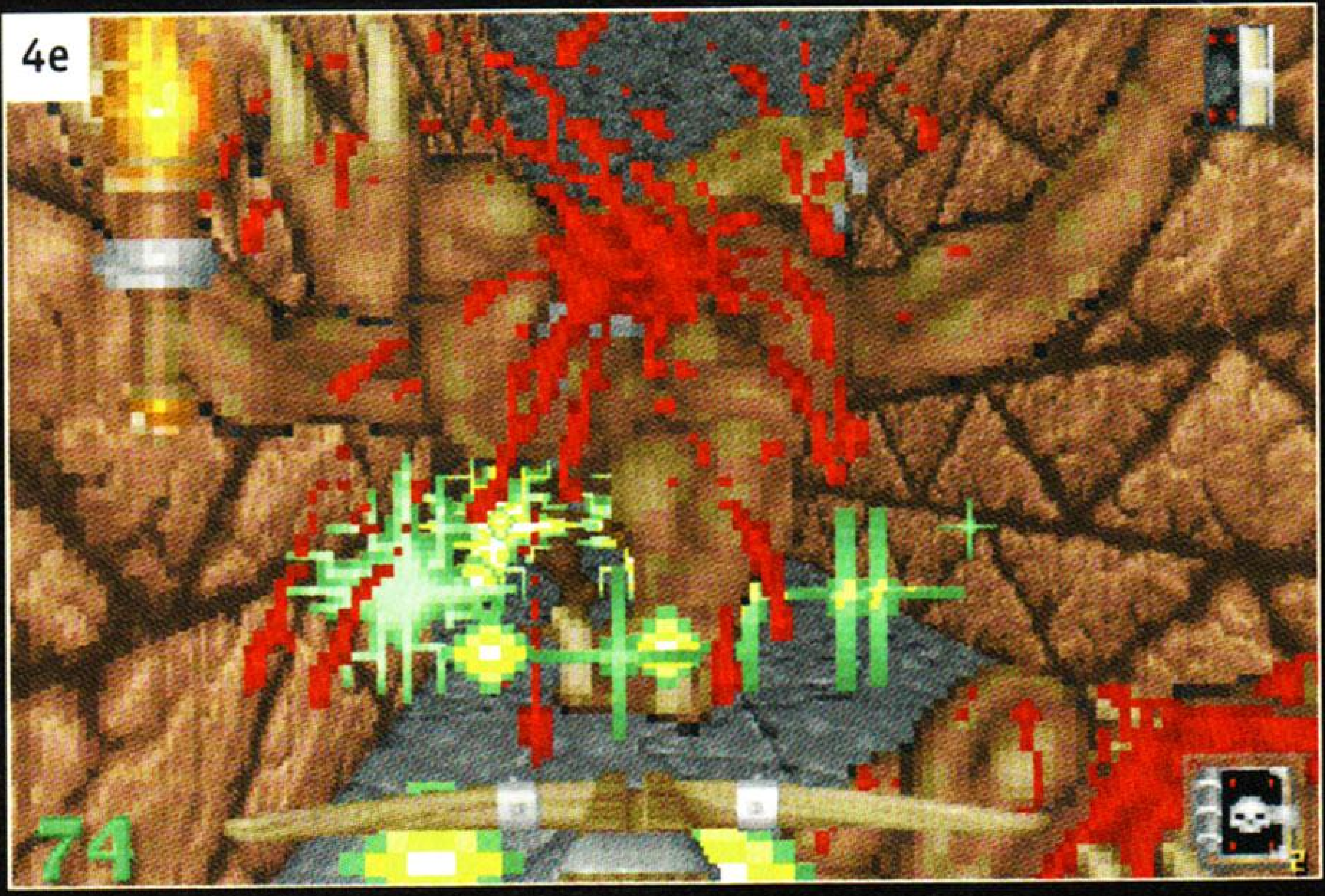
4 CROSSBOW - Next to receive the Spartak treatment was an ordinary wooden crossbow carved with ancient inscriptions. Remarking that the string wasn't present, Spartak aimed the weapon and a magical line of green energy appeared, along with a sparkling arrow of green ether. Once fired, this shard of pure magical energy ripped apart the waiting hellspawn with great effectiveness. Spartak was then surprised when four Golems ambushed him from close range, and this was when the first failing of the crossbow was realised. The main problem was one of reloading; the weapon just doesn't give you a rapid response that is so necessary in adventuring situations. This is also a weapon that becomes more of a hindrance in close combat (and when you're pinned to a wall by foes) as it dispatches one enemy initially, but allows others to strike whilst the reload takes

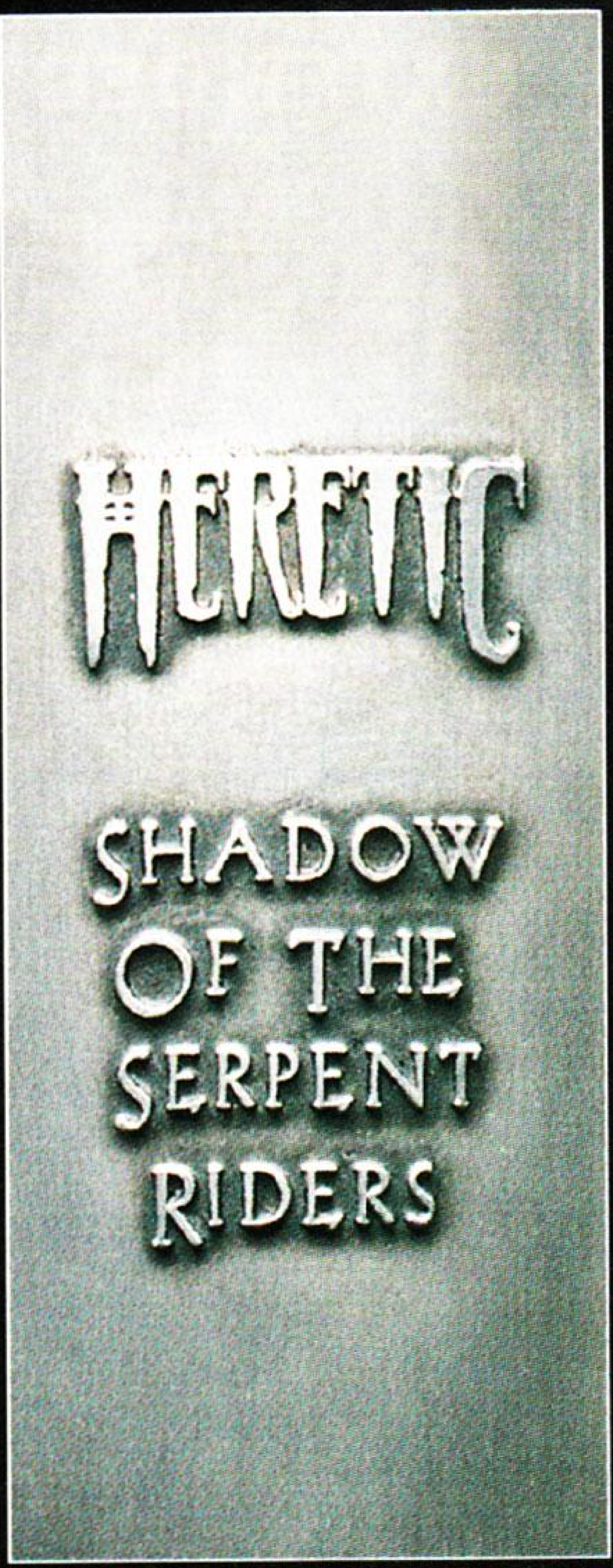
4b



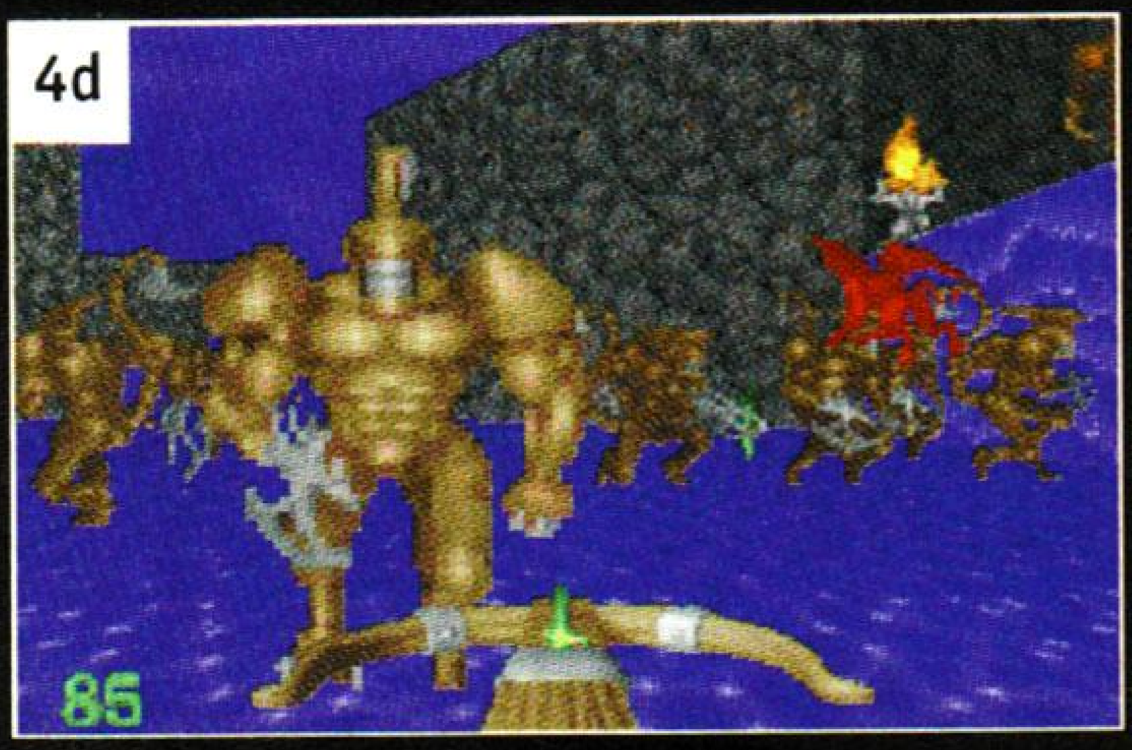
CRACK THE CRANIUMS OF CARNIVOROUS CRYPT CREATURES!






HERETIC
SHADOW OF THE SERPENT RIDERS

Once the crossbow is given the Tome of Power treatment, it becomes a considerably stronger and can destroy groups of advancing beasties with only a couple of shots. Perhaps Spartak should be considering a more deadly weapon at this juncture (right).



place. This is a damaging artifact at range, and is useful to unleash whilst backpedalling along a corridor, but remember to change to a rapid-fire assault artifact when the horrors of D'Sparil are close by.

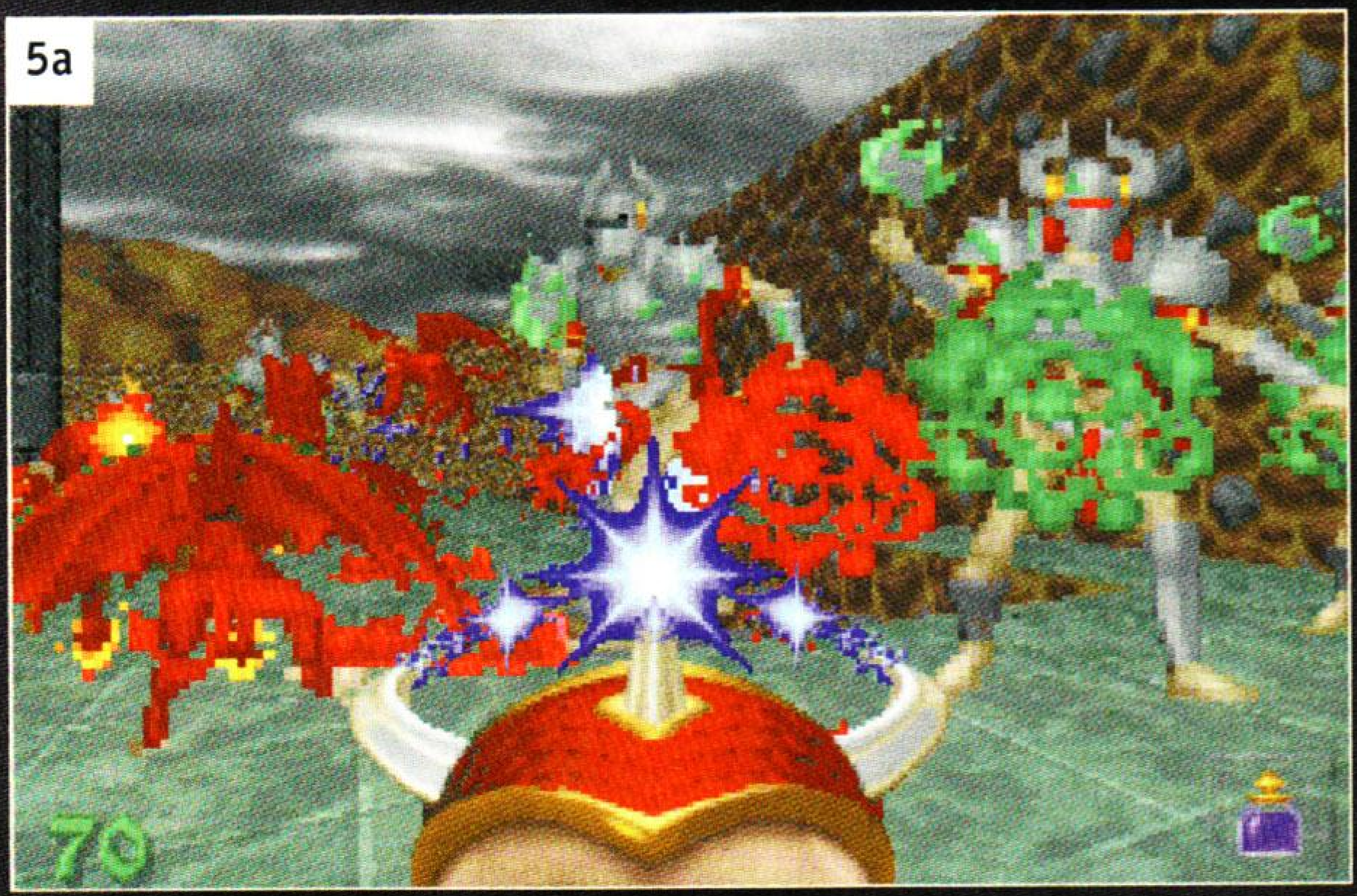
Flicking through the Tome of Power, Spartak finally found the rites of summoning and channelled great power into the crossbow. A splendid sparkle of green energy crackled about the crossbow's shaft as Spartak lifted and aimed the charged bow. The result was as expected; an arrow launched and immediately split into three other shards of magical death and destruction. Given the Spartak thumbs-up approval, the tomed-up crossbow dealt a large amount of death over a slightly wider arch, but inflicted damage on between three and five enemies at once. You don't need to worry about close combat swiping, as most enemies explode after one barrage.

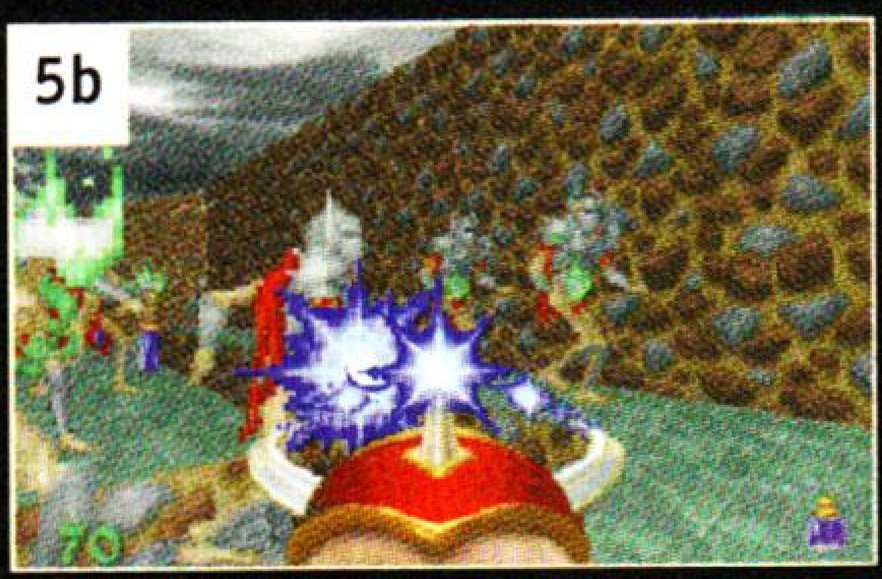
> ***"The evil D'Sparil has spread fear and pestilence throughout the land for too long!! My people hide in Shandor's forests, but I have the strength to fight on with a rapid-fire response!"***

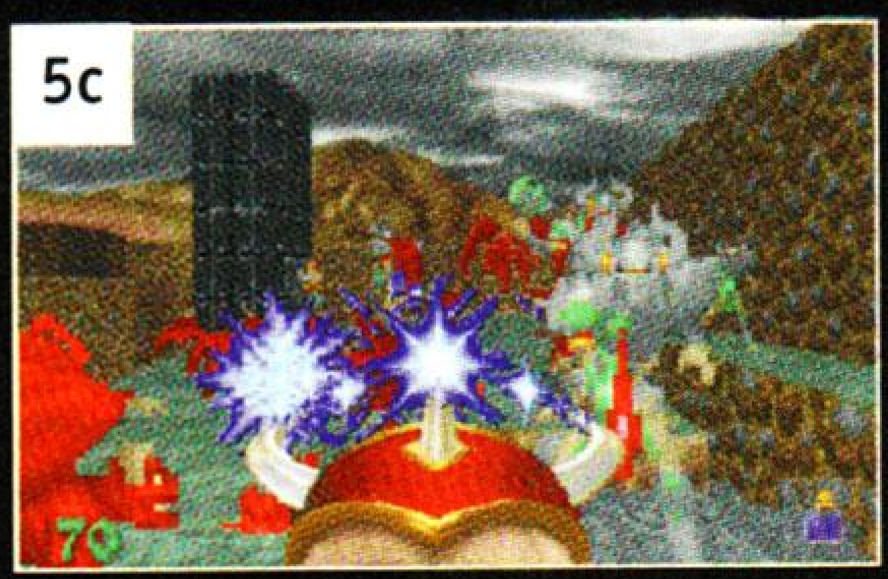
5 DRAGON'S CLAW - Battling through towards the inner chambers of the citadel, we granted Spartak the chance to face the enemy with some rapid assault weaponry. Slotting in the dragon's claw, Spartak claimed that his fist "glowed with unnatural vigour" before attempting to cleanse the area of demonic evil. Facing a couple of Sabreclaws and an Undead Warrior, our Elven warrior sidestepped with nimble dexterity before blasting away and shouting Elven obscenities at high volume. On his return, Spartak caught his breath and explained the merits of this weapon. He explained that it appeared to be a rapid-fire version of the Elvenwand, but that the energy bolts inflicted greater damage. The main use of this weapon appeared to be at long range with many enemies closing in; at which stage a rapid response was called for. Coupled with a bit of strafing, Spartak peppered the incoming enemies with shards of blue light, and saw many crumble under the onslaught. The elven hero's only concern was with the large quantities of ammunition used, as the claw sapped many refuelling crystals in a matter of seconds.

After a scrabble for more energy, Spartak reentered the chambers carrying his trusty Tome of Power under an arm. A brilliant flash of blue electricity consumed him, and he laughed a manic laugh before jogging off and letting rip at any monster unlucky enough to cross his path. We noted the interesting special effects of the powered weapon and concluded that it was ideal for clearing areas of unwanted entities. Essentially, the superd-up claw spouted forth larger grey crystals of destruction that found a target and exploded in a shower of supernatural shrapnel. This is more than a match for most low and mid-level creatures, but for the larger entities, Spartak recommends you tool up with a super weapon before unleashing a Tome of Power.

One of the frenzied pitched battles that Heretic is so famous for. Keep darted about, and different monsters turn on one another! Let animosity reign!



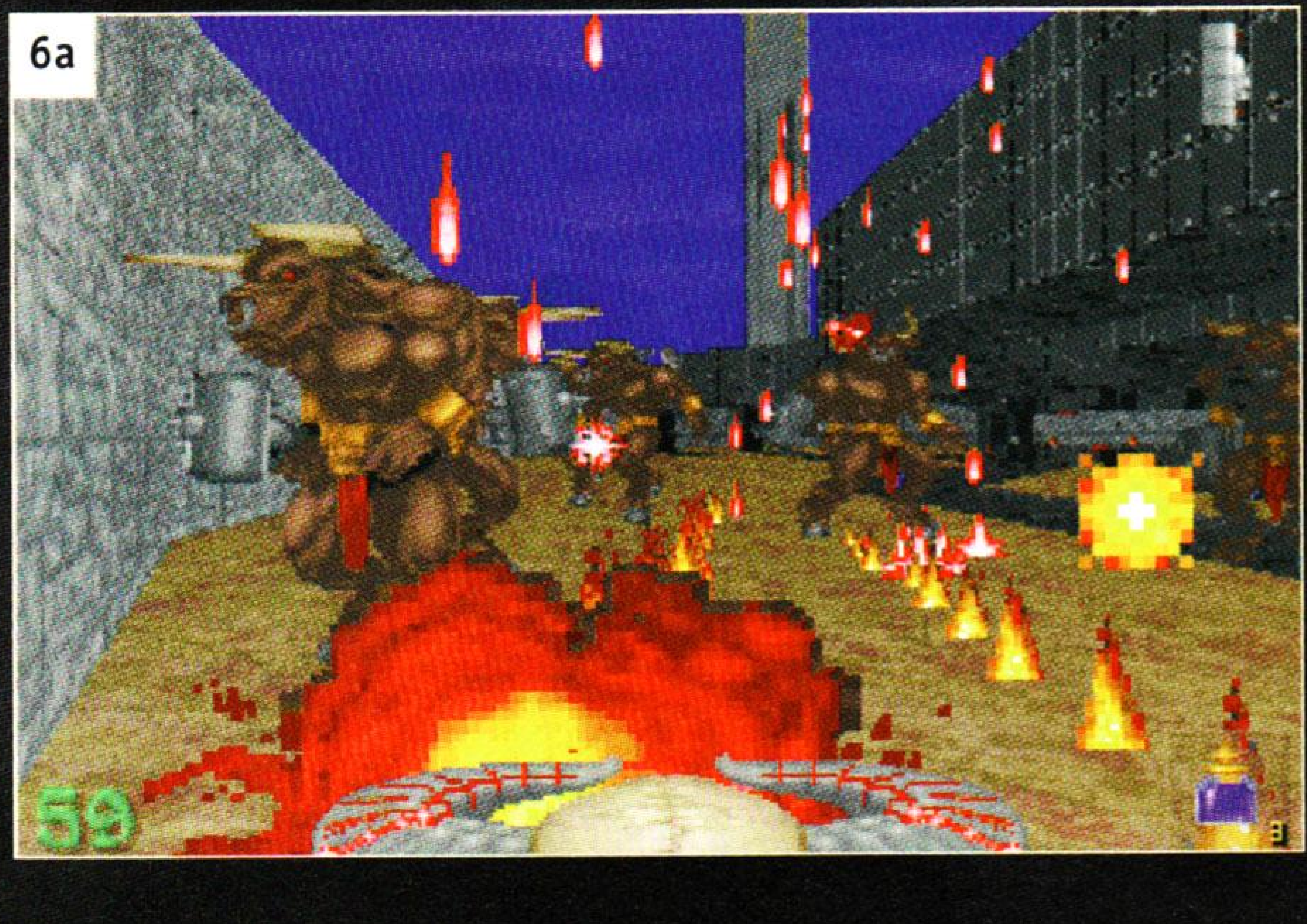


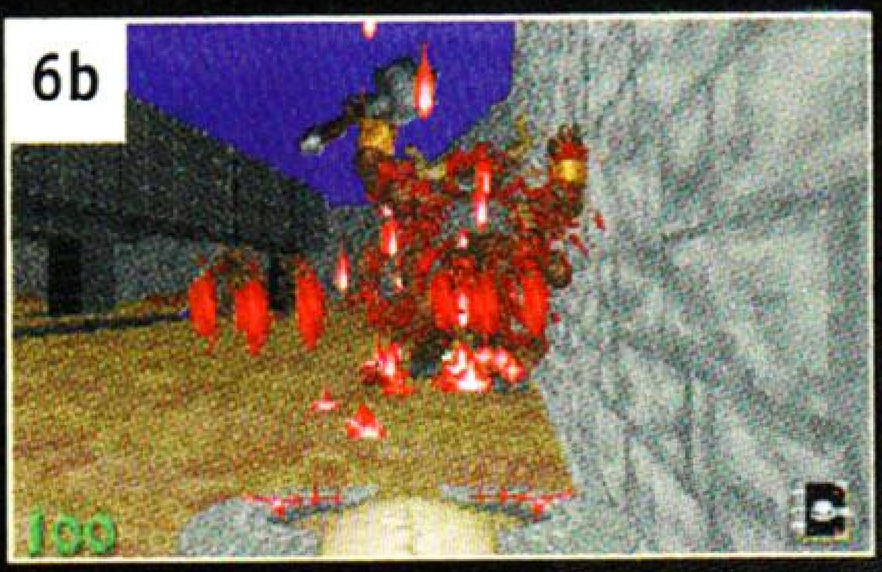


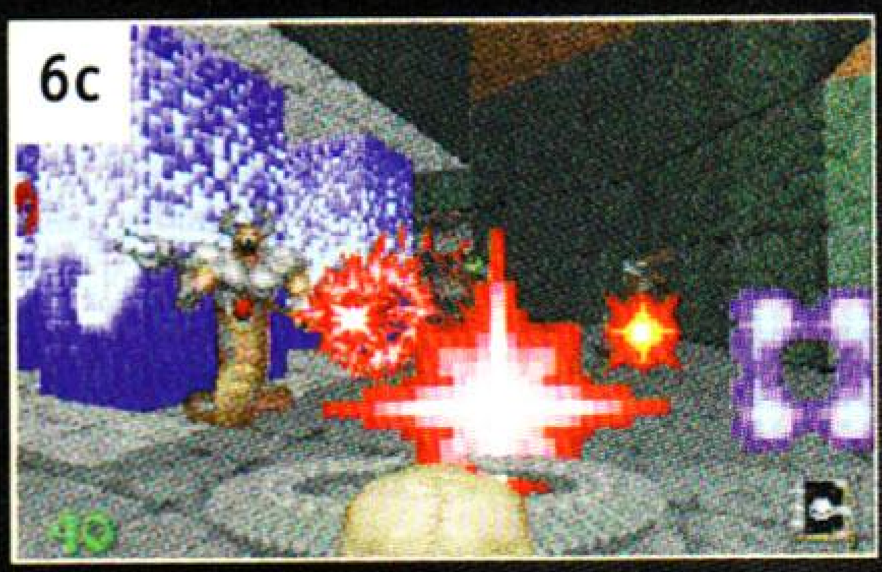
A group of Undead Warriors feels the force of the Dragon's Claw. This rapid-firing assault glove staggers foes, but makes such a noise that all adjacent monsters know exactly where you are!

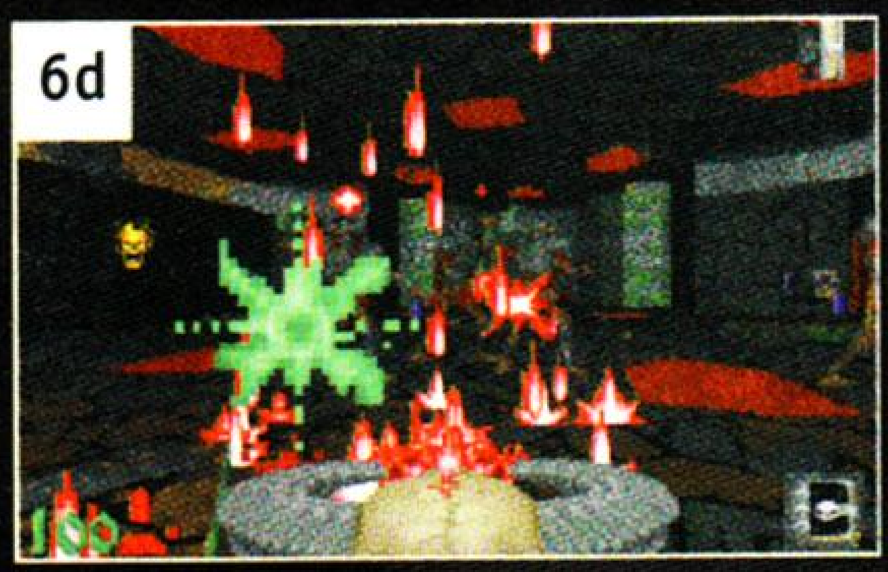
6 HELLSTAFF - Our cloaked hero of the Sidhe tribe returned from D'Sparil's inner sanctum complaining that the monsters were getting a little on the large side. We responded by placing a Hellstaff in his clammy mitts, and the Destroyer was pleased. Ripping apart a decaying red drape and overturning a crumbling antique table, Spartak ran into D'Sparil's private chapel of death and it wasn't long before we heard the first sounds of enemy hitting stone. The returning hero waded through a small lake of oozing gore to inform us that the steady stream of red plasma bullets were more than effective in dispatching a room full of Ophidians. Quick to bring to bear, and packing enough firepower to take down a room full of Weredragons, this handy skull-shaped killing implement is an ideal weapon for the more advanced player. Again, the ammunition is spent at a disgracefully quick speed, but the results are well worth it. This should be the mainstay of any heretical elf with a deathwish, and the hellstaff has the added benefit of killing targets efficiently both at range or in close combat.

A quick shuffle and mystic mumblings from Spartak, and the hellstaff became engorged with a crimson mist. Uttering a cry of glee, Spartak ran off shooting wildly before reporting back to inform us of his success rates. "There was a mighty spewing of energy" he explained, "and the world turned red. My Gods were chanting and the sky opened... red rain descended onto the hellish beasts and they dissolved before my power!" On closer inspection, we found this to be true, as the tomed-up hellstaff shot larger red balls into the enemy



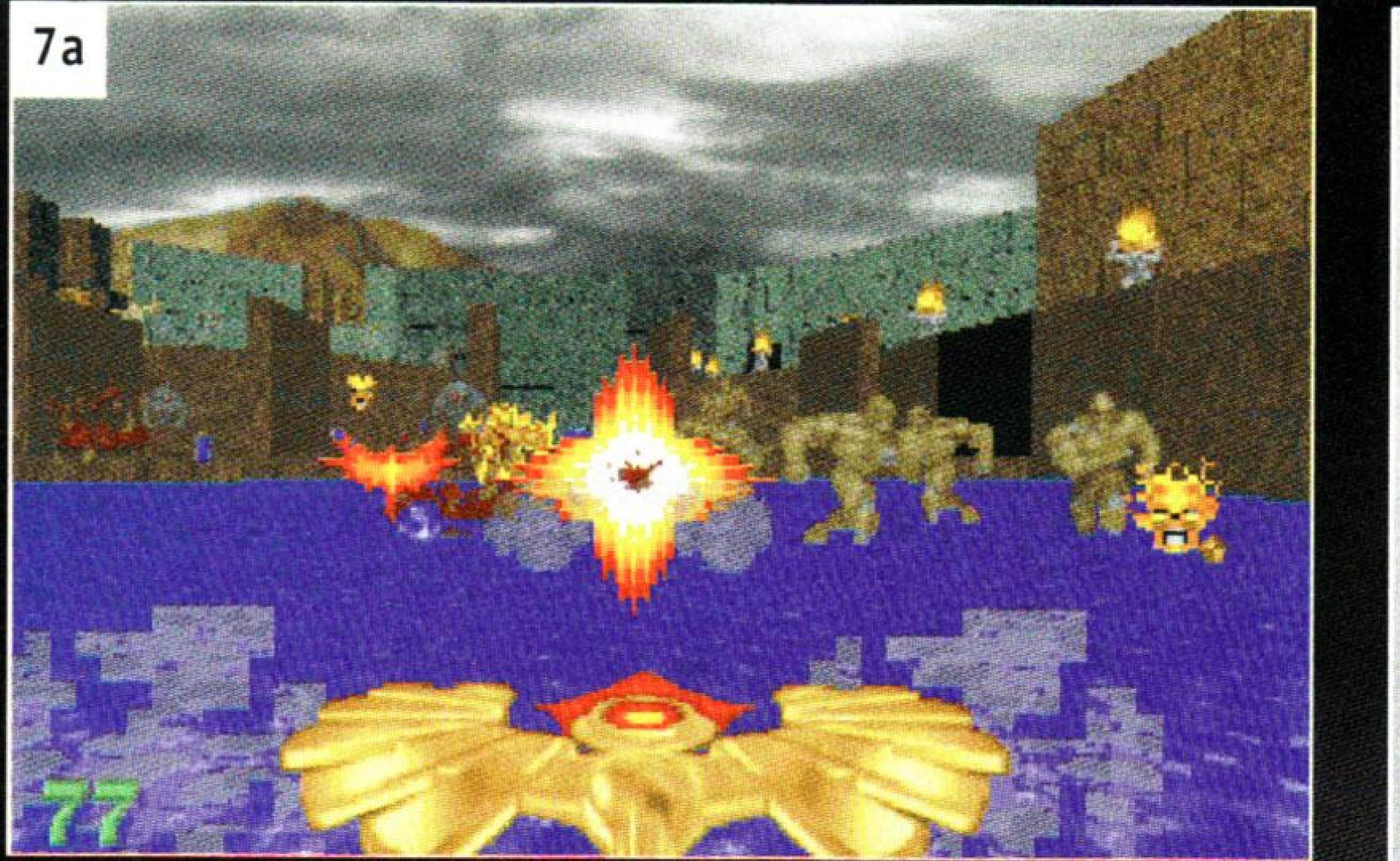






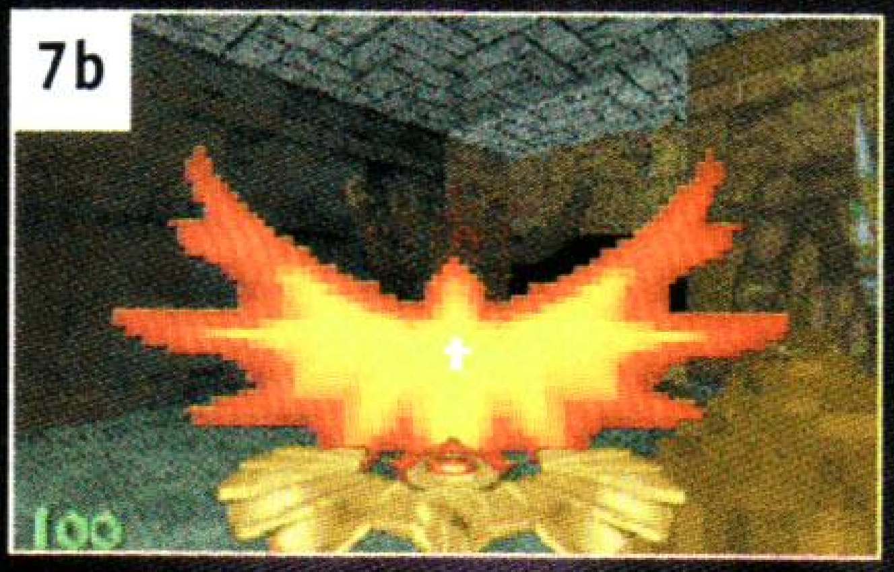
> ***"My father, Ernest, taught me the ways of the fighter! Now I use this gift to pulverise all of D'Sparil's mutations!"***

HELLSTAFF DETAILS CONTINUE OVER THE PAGE

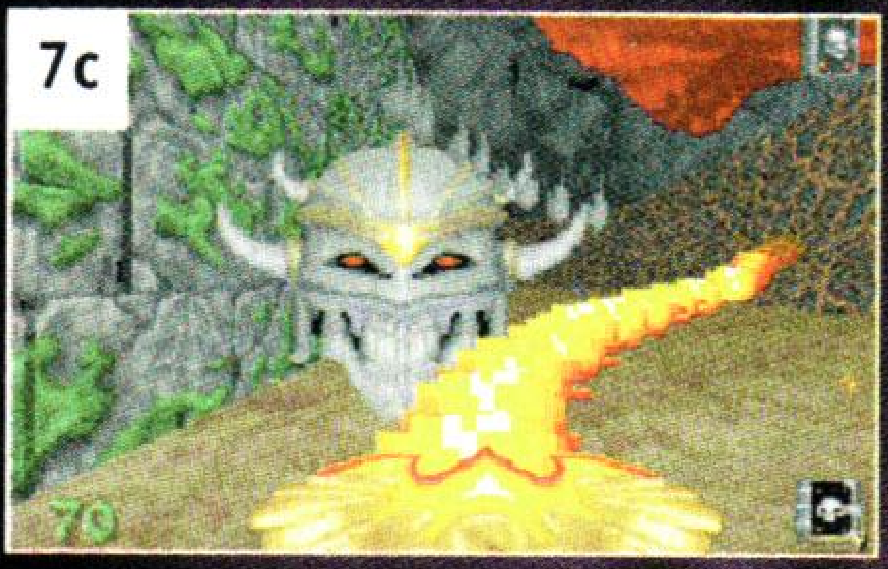


HERETIC

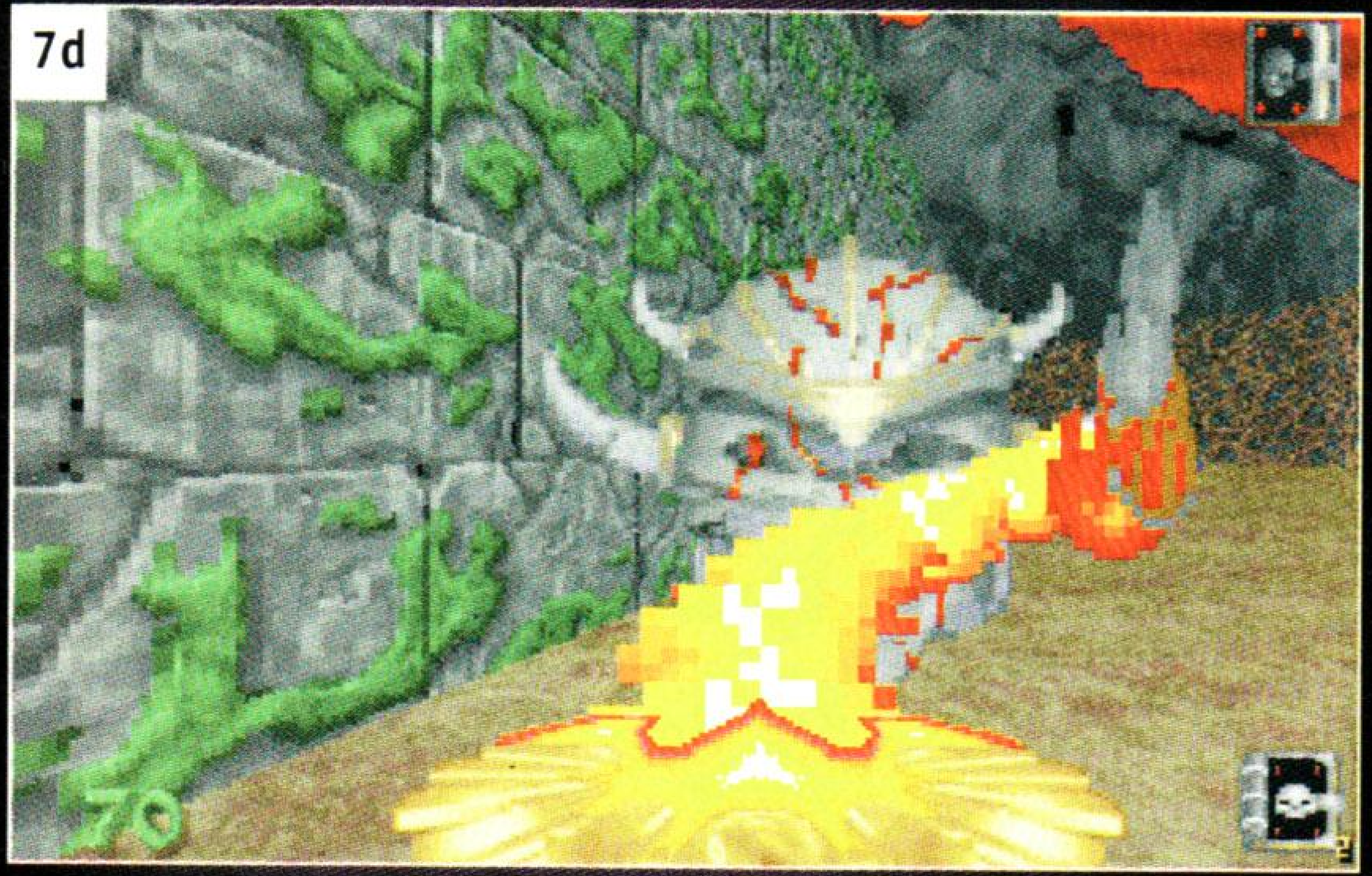
SHADOW OF THE SERPENT RIDERS



that exploded and showered them in a continuous downpour of death! This is without a doubt the weapon to use in confined areas, as the red rain dissolves enemies with great haste, but fails to perform well in outdoor tests, when the tougher enemies were able to move out of the showers.

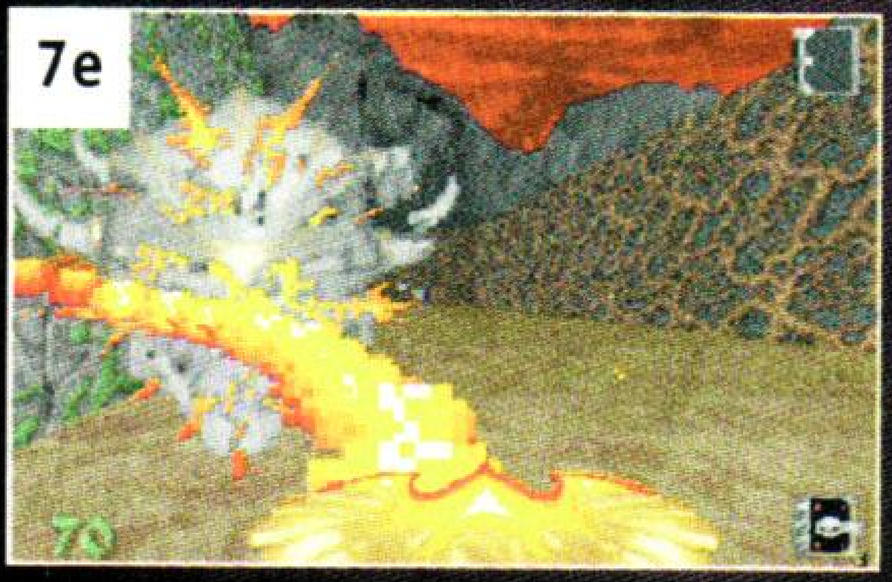


7 PHOENIX ROD - Hacking through to D'Sparil's living quarters, our hero stumbled upon three Maulotaurs finishing off the remains of a Weredragon. Somewhat perturbed at Spartak's ungainly entrance, they raised their axes in anger and rushed forward. Fortunately, our hero has recently received a most revered artifact, the phoenix rod. Spartak discovered why the rod was so-named very quickly, as each aimed shot hit a charging Maulotaur with extreme force. Upon impact, the Maulotaur recoiled slightly as a magical bird exploded into the hapless beast, showering it in magical fire. We instructed Spartak never to use the phoenix rod at close range, as the blast area of effect is somewhat immense; a plan of backpedalling and rapid firing proved to be the best course of action.



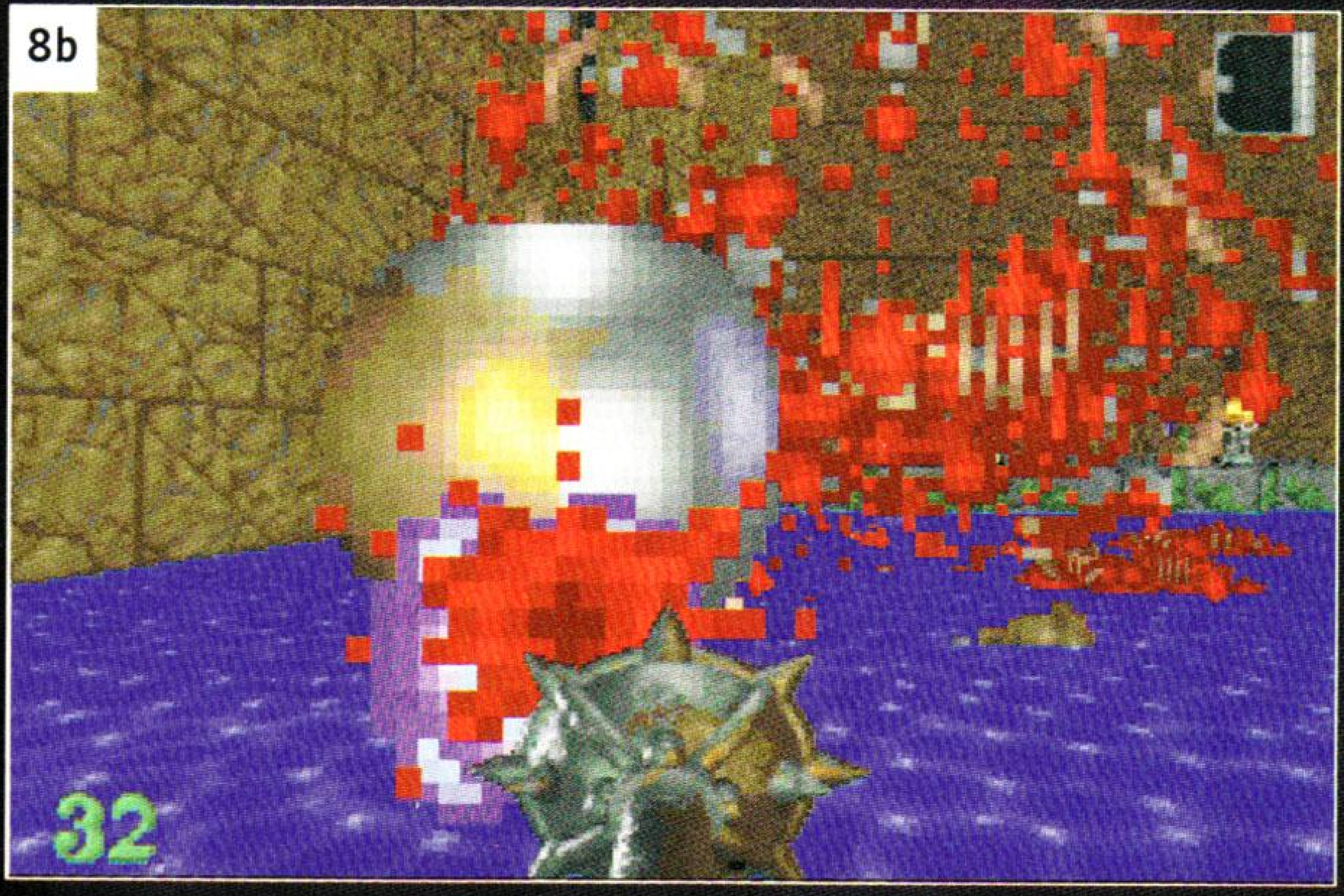
However, when the Tome of power was dusted down and read from, the opposite method of attack was not only necessary, but imperative. Charging into the fray, Spartak shouted the final incantation and let rip with the artifact. Instantaneously, a thick plume of bright fire belched from the rod, consuming a Maulotaur instantly, and inflicting terrible damage as the constant stream of fire burned and charred the creature. The powered rod is the ultimate close combat weapon in Heretic, pure and simple. Forget the gauntlet; just power this up and watch all your foes disintegrate in front of you in a plume of magical fire! Spartak agreed, shouting; "By the Gods, these foul denizens shall taste my ultimate fury!".

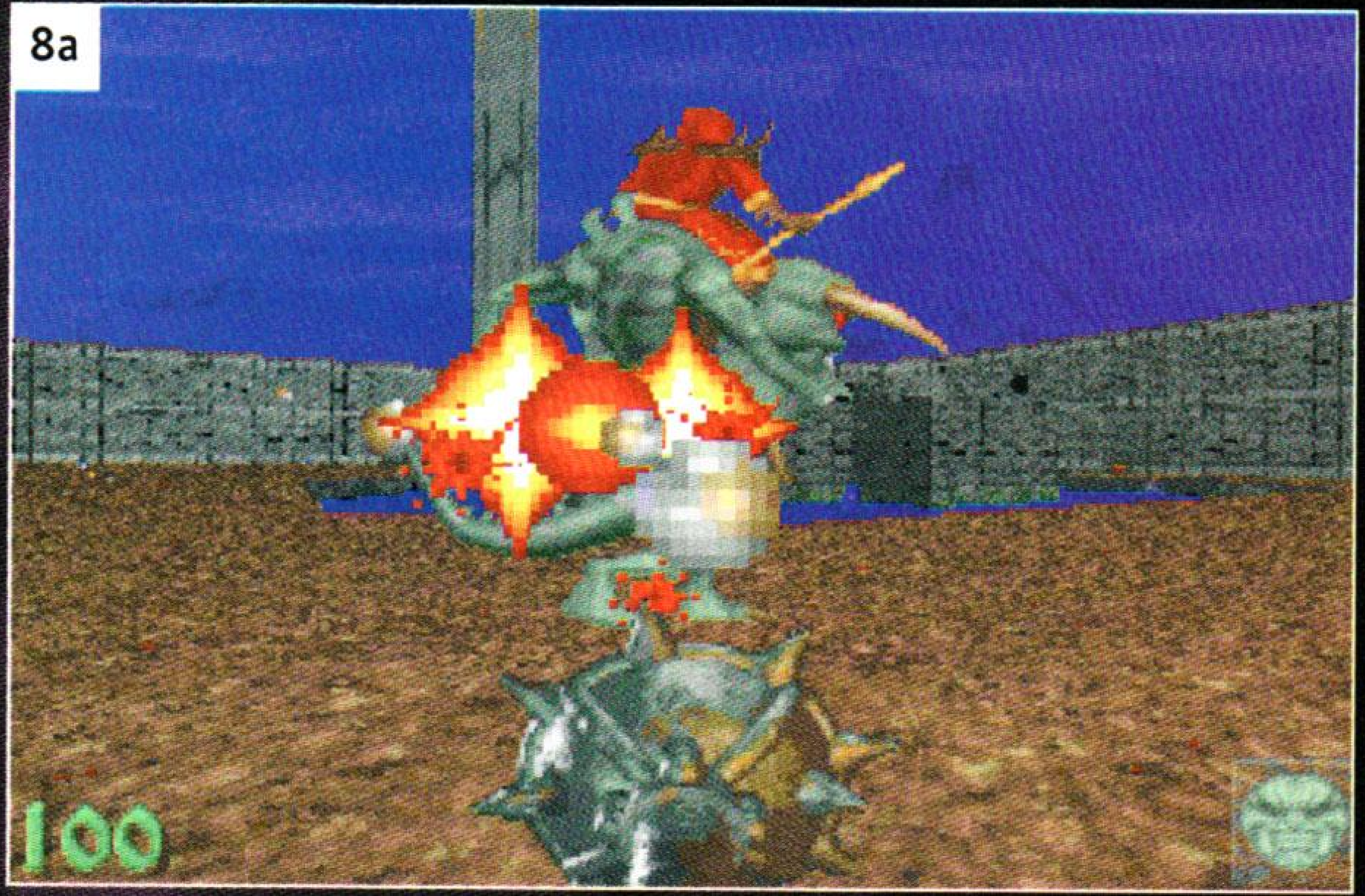
"BY THE GIRLY KILT OF WARRIOR CHIEF BERNARD MCBENDAK! I VOW TO SMITE THE SPOOKY SATAN SPAWN THAT SUBJUGATE THE SIDHE!"



One of the many giant floating skulls that inhabit the lands of Heretic receives on of the largest magic-based portions known to humanity. This is the powerful magic of the Phoenix Rod used to full effect, and is employed by pressing and holding down your fire button. Then the weapon becomes a death-dealing item of ultimate destruction!

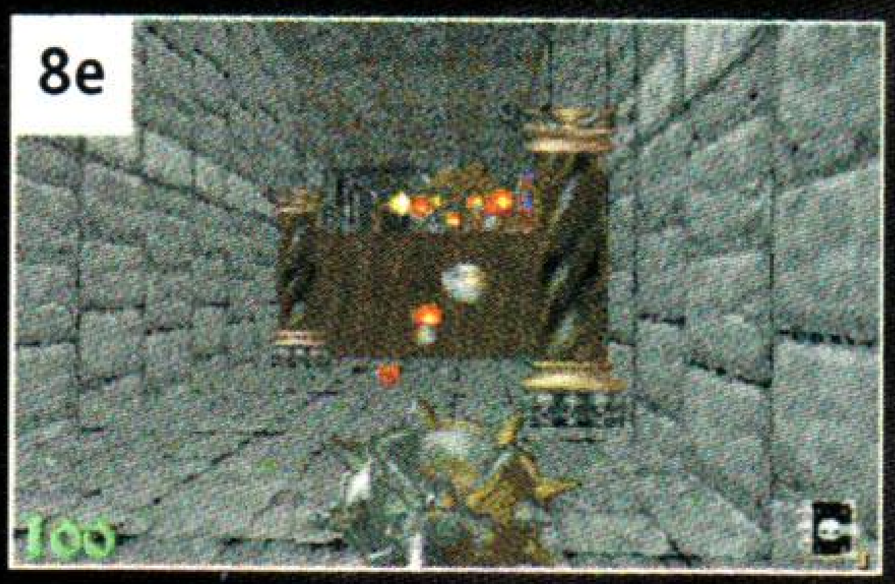
8 MACE CANNON - The final of the Sidhe's weapons of destruction proved to be something of an anticlimax. We were prepared for a huge tripod-mounted ornate hunting cannon (favoured by the Thrikkata people), but instead we were treated to a rapid assault mace firing large ball-bearings. This cuts swathes through all but the largest creatures, but this still didn't impress Spartak as the weapon dispatches enemies in exactly the same manner as the Hellstaff. We agreed with the elven hero that there seems to be no major difference between the two artifacts - until we powered the cannon up, that is.

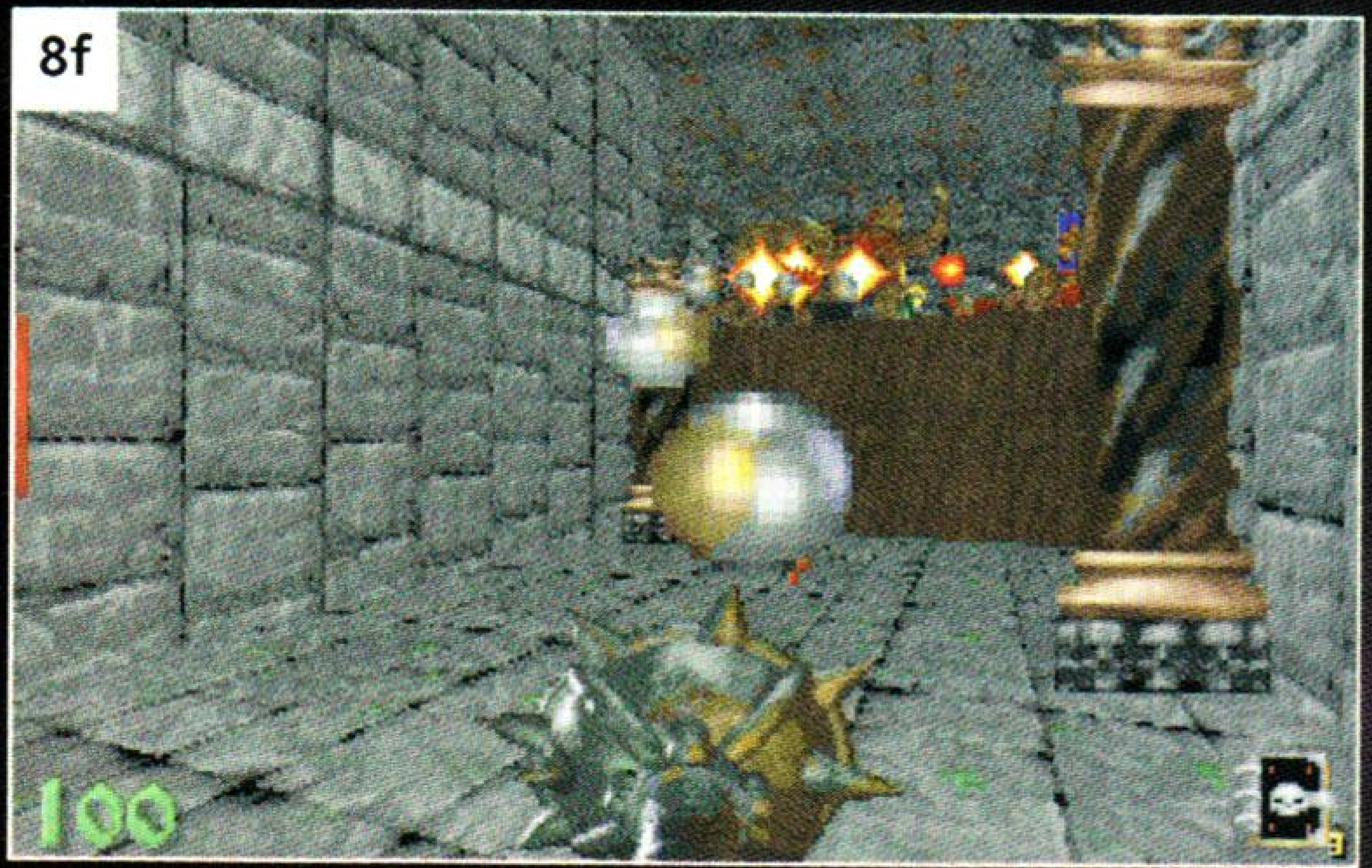


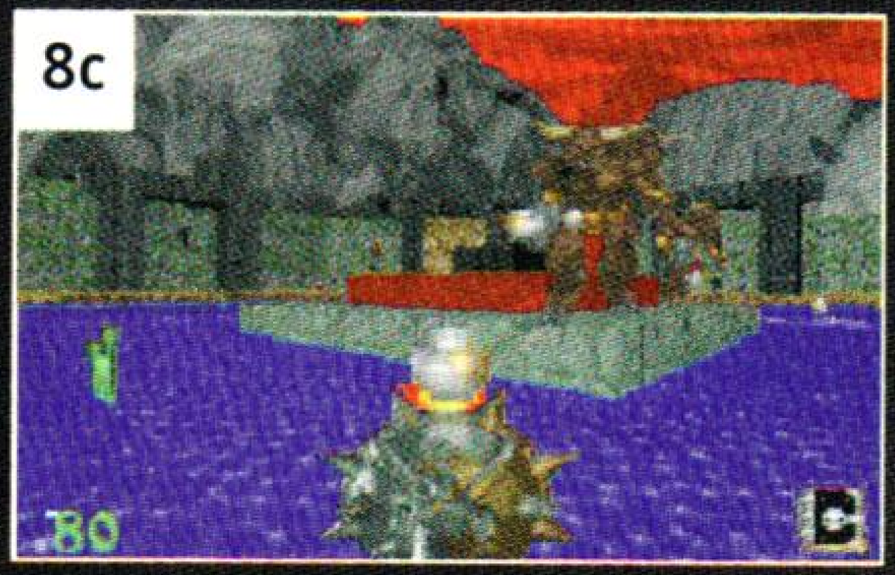


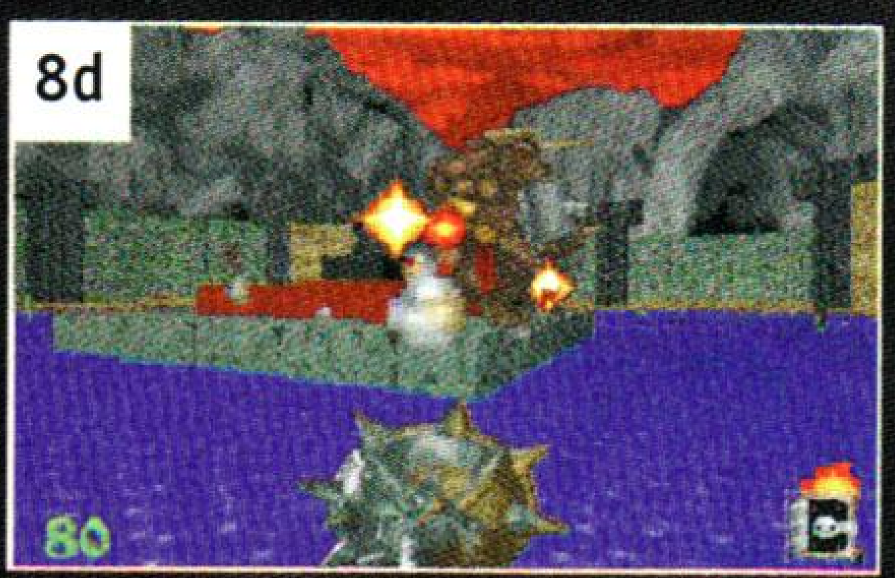
Once the mystic mumblings were complete, Spartak ventured into D'Sparil's personal chamber, and ran straight into the seething wizard himself. Hoping for a minor miracle and praying to the spirits of his departed Elders, he launched into a pitched battle, bringing the cannon to bear almost immediately. Spartak was then slightly taken aback when huge rolling metal balls rapidly shot out towards D'Sparil instead of what he had hoped (a massive all-consuming fireball), but still he refused to give up, pumping ball after ball into the cowled wizard. We urged Spartak to change his cannon for the phoenix rod, but a rage consumed him, and still he struck at D'Sparil with the cannon. Finally out of ammunition, D'Sparil seized his chance and grabbed Spartak by the throat. "Attack me with that puny item, would you? I'll show you the true meaning of pain!" he cried, and tightened his grip on Spartak's rapidly constricting neck. After a bloodcurdling death gurgle, Spartak lay twitching on the ground, a mocking D'Sparil standing over his prone form...

The moral of this story? Don't try attacking larger creatures with the cannon (even when powered up); rely instead on the phoenix rod to dish the death that ultimately should result in the destruction of D'Sparil. The future of the world now rests heavy on the shoulders of another Sidhe elf. Spartak the destroyer is no more, and D'Sparil grows ever more powerful. The fate of the earth is in your hands... do you have the skill and guile to battle overwhelming odds in the lands of Heretic..?









More mauling madness with the game's secret weapon (above). However, Spartak remained unconvinced of the Mace Cannon's power, and we agreed after D'Sparil killed him. RIP Spartak!

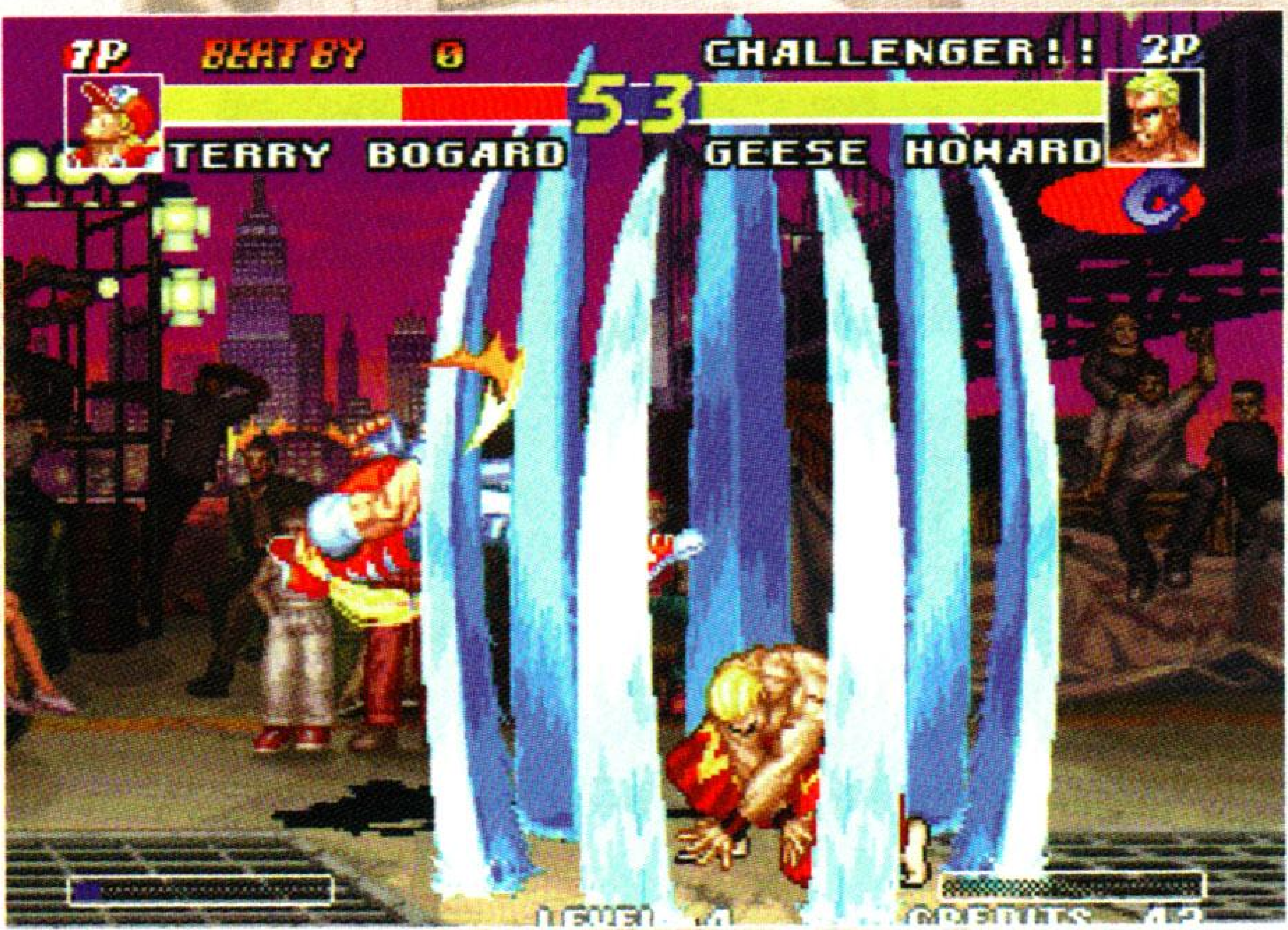
SPARTAK IS DEAD. ARE YOU BRAVE ENOUGH TO FACE THE DARK OF D'SPARIL?

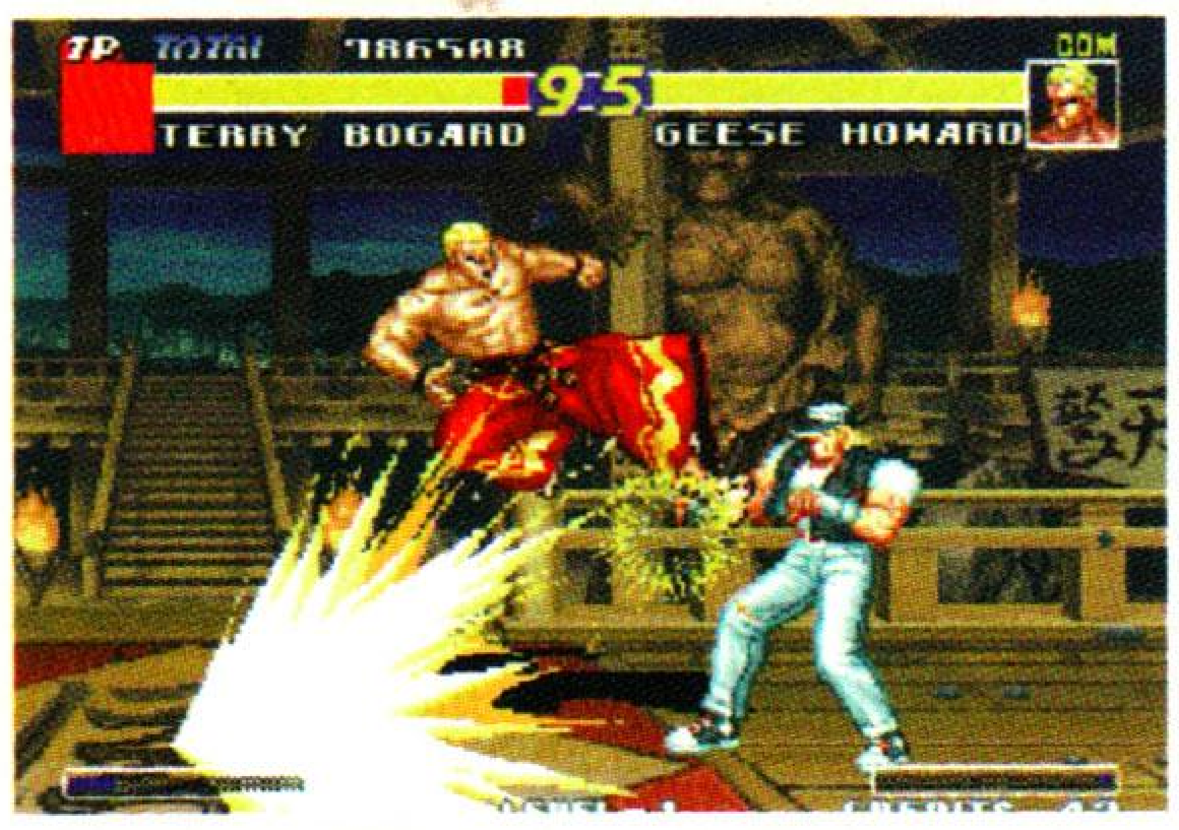
NOT GUARANTEED TO IMPRESS YOUR MATES
SNACK BAR
Guaranteed to Quench your THIRST
Sprite
IMAGE IS NOTHING. THIRST IS EVERYTHING. OBEY YOUR THIRST.

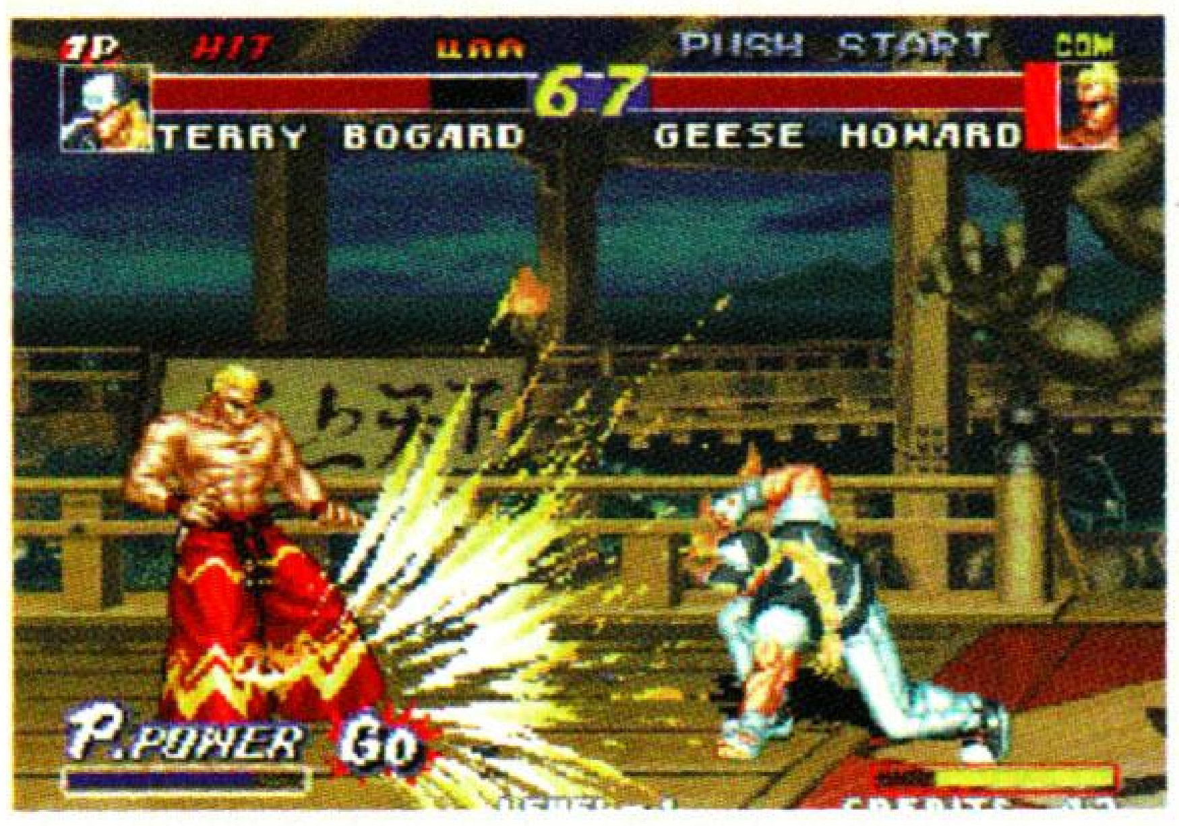
REAL BOUT FATAL FURY ARTWORK © SNK 1995.

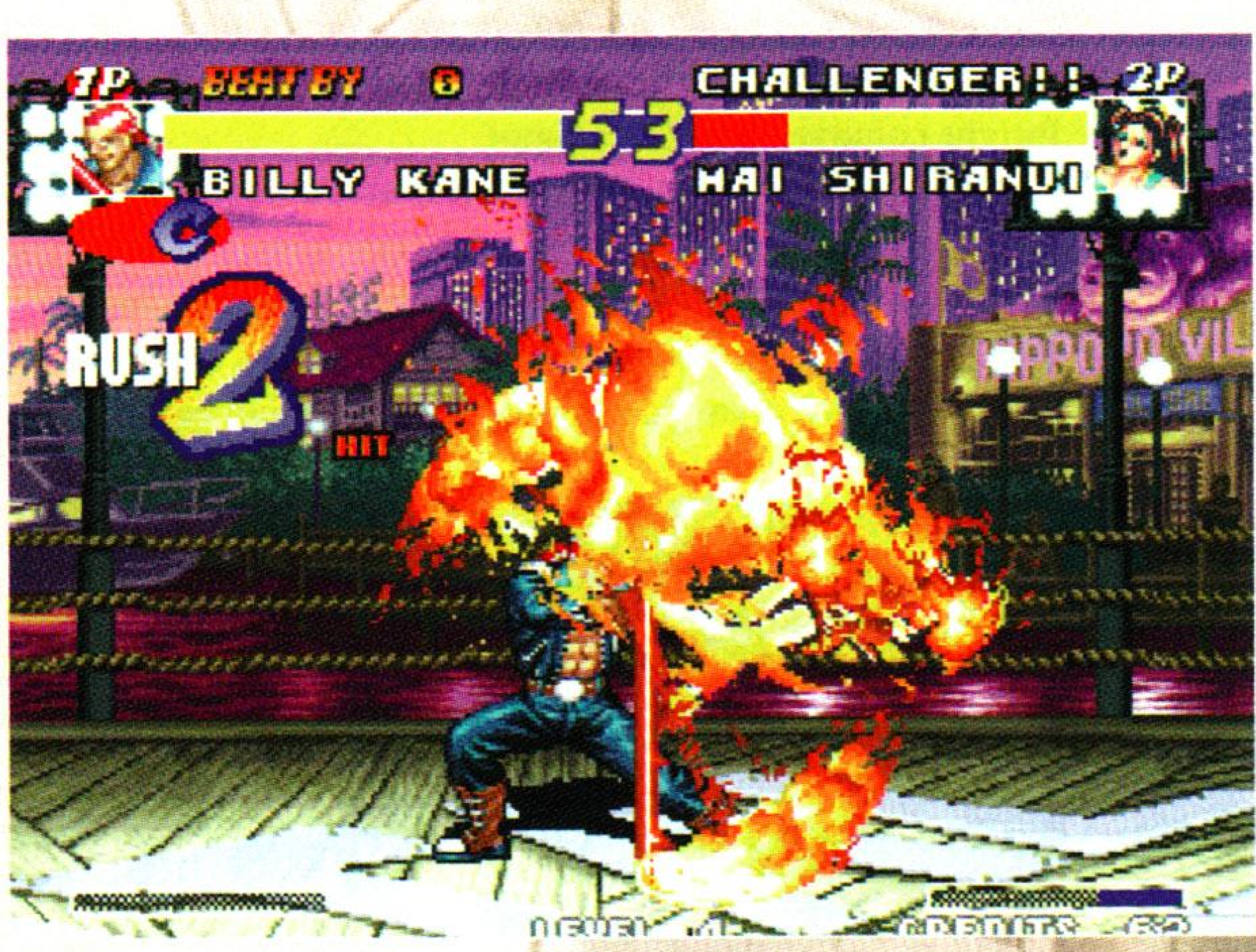
All-new REAL BOUT FATAL FURY - Learn the secret arts and defeat Geese Howard once and for all!

As you can tell from the screenshots, Geese is back with greater power than ever before! Central to Mr Howard's combat prowess is his Rising Sword (right) that can cause a major headache for a jumping foe. In the one-player game, a determined Terry Bogard (clad in his away strip) journeys to Geese Towers for the ultimate showdown (below)!


1P BEAT BY 0
CHALLENGER!! 2P
53
TERRY BOGARD
GEESE HOWARD
LEVEL-4
CREDITS 42


1P TOTAL 786580
95
COM
TERRY BOGARD
GEESE HOWARD


1P HIT
PUSH START
COM
67
TERRY BOGARD
GEESE HOWARD
P.POWER GO


1P BEAT BY 0
CHALLENGER!! 2P
53
BILLY KANE
MAI SHIRANUI
RUSH 2
HIT
LEVEL-4
CREDITS 62

The previous competition had reached a climax. Victories had been won, and the unworthy had paid dearly for their lack of skill. Watching the proceedings from a balcony atop Southtown's highest skyscraper was an old competitor; his face covered by a mask of cloth. The final part of the resurrection ceremony was complete, and the pact was signed. All that was left to do now was to wait for Mr Kane to return with the third of the sacred scrolls, and the hidden fighter could return to wreak the havoc he had once enjoyed. But first he needed to rebuild his strength, as the dark pacts had crushed his mental and physical aura.

Two months later, the scrolls are firmly in the possession of a certain Mr Howard. From his business headquarters, he surveys the Southtown metropolis and having memorised the scrolls' incantations, he ponders his next actions. Leisurely flicking through the last of the three Qin parchments, he sips a mug of herbal remedy before summoning his trusted and hired thug, Billy Kane.

"I now have the final scroll and the limitless power of Qin is mine!!"

"Yes, Mr Howard, but remember you're not quite at full strength. Those brothers will try to retrieve the papers while you're recovering. I think the best plan of action is to lie low for an.. arrck!!!"

Geese picked up Kane by the neck before relaxing his grip slightly and throwing him across the office. Kane hit the wall hard before crumpling to the ground.

"Geese Howard does not 'recover' or 'lie low'!! And I pay you to kill people, not think for yourself!!"

"But boss," ventured Billy through a mouthful of blood; "the Bogard scum and their friends are powerful enough to seize the scrolls from us. You know what happens if Terry and Andy win them back. And they're descended from Qin himself!"

"Billy, you're thinking again! By the next moon alignment, 2000 years will have passed and the power of the scrolls will hold no meaning. The power in them will be destroyed, and the Bogard boys will be crushed utterly!!"

A red haze surrounded Geese, and he seemed to grow slightly in stature. He turned to survey the office, and Billy was startled to see a magical flame burning in his eyes.

"I am Geese Howard!!" he cried, "I am fully revived and I seek revenge! The time has come for the Bogard boys to crumble under some heavy punishment! Make arrangements for the ultimate King of the Fighters tournament!"

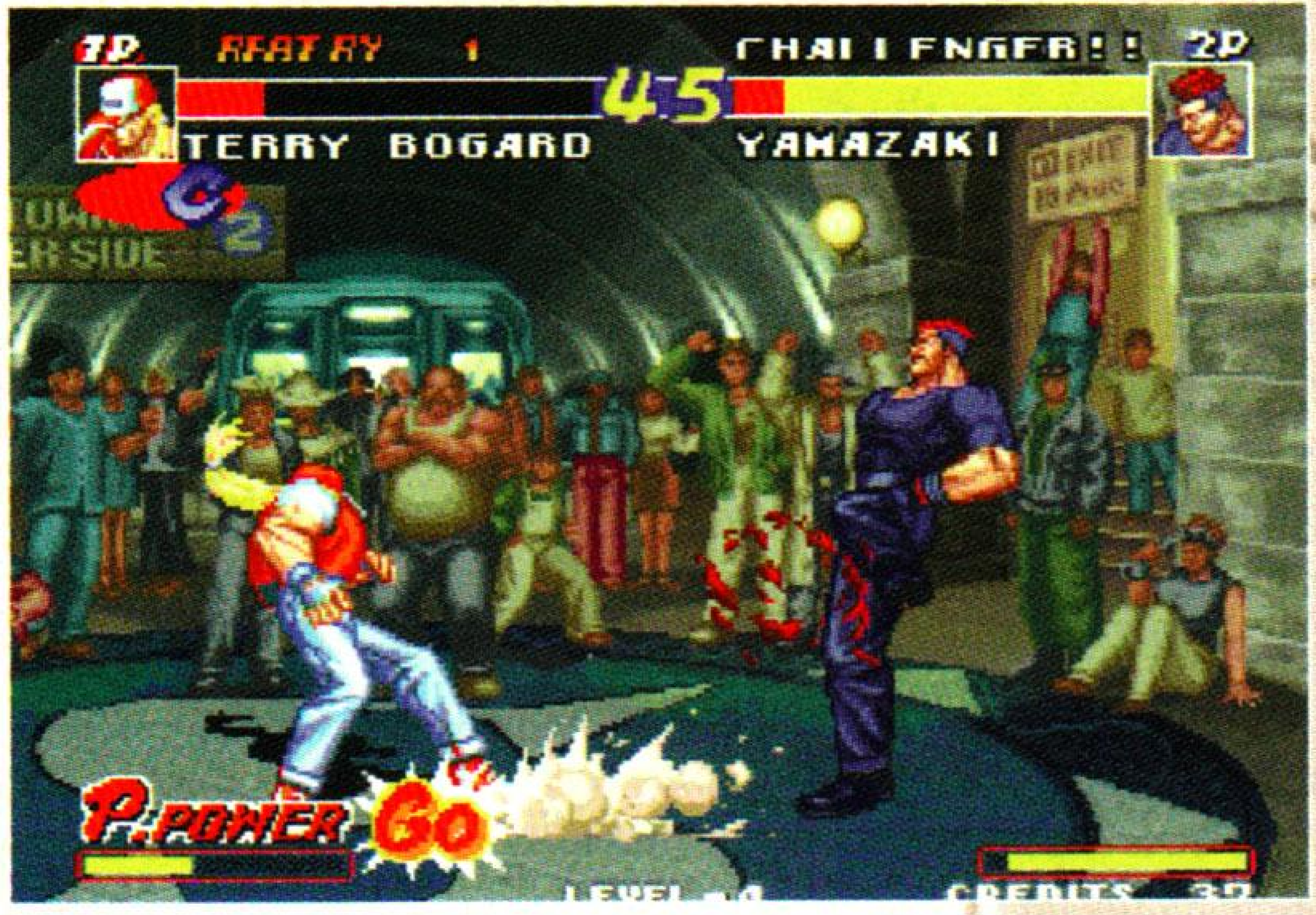
"Kim Kap Hwan and Duck are already available, Mr Howard."

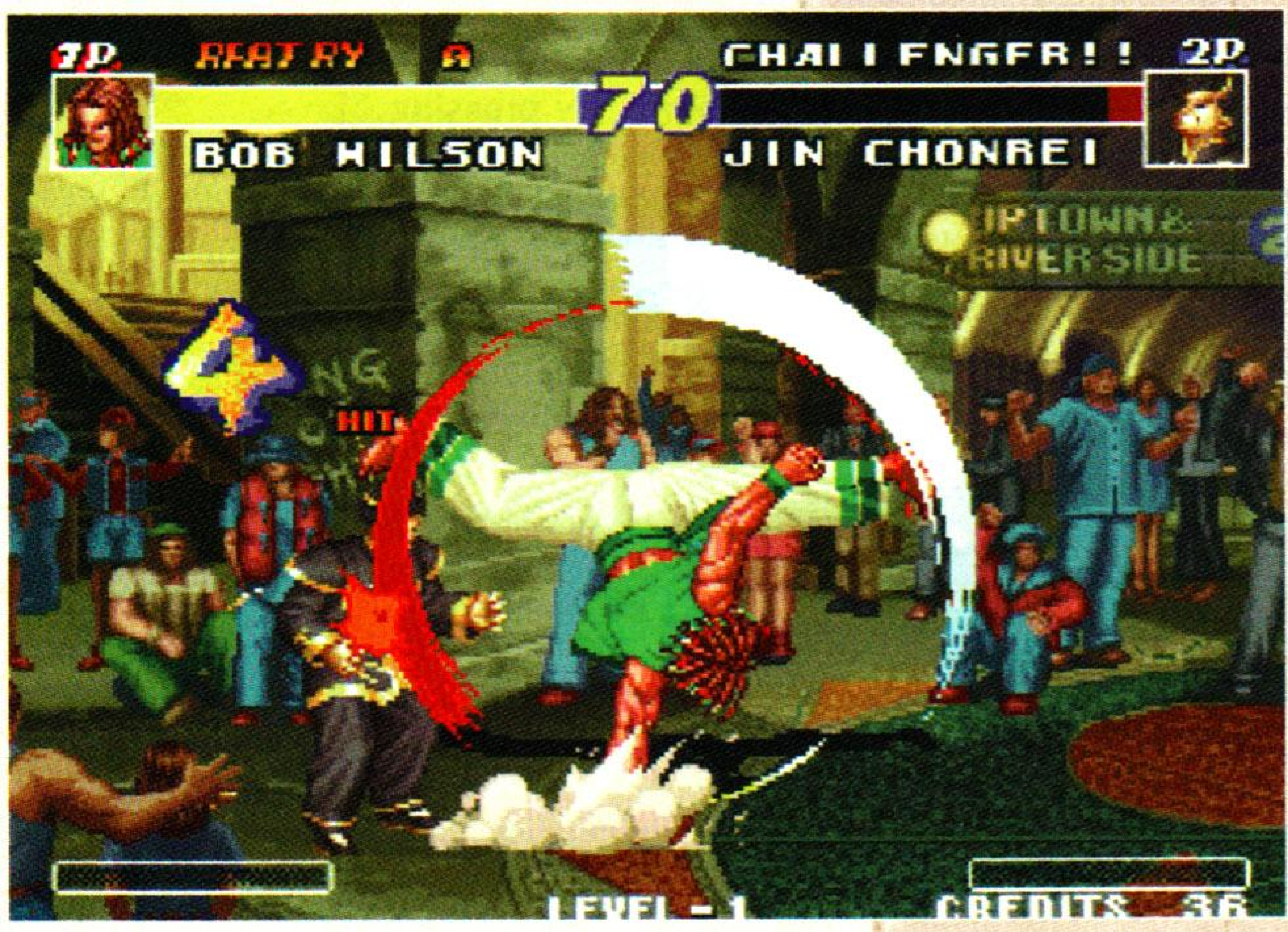
"Good. Excellent. My power is unbeatable. I shall don the widest pantaloons that I can obtain, and will wait for the winner to challenge me! He shall die at my hands in screaming agony!!"

"Very good, Mr Howard."

There is a new force of evil in Southtown. A flickering supernatural light can be seen in Geese Tower...

> *"The three sacred Qin scrolls are now in my possession. My reign of terror can continue without delay!"*


1P BEAT BY 1
CHALLENGER!! 2P
45
TERRY BOGARD
YAMAZAKI
P.POWER GO
LEVEL-4
CREDITS 32

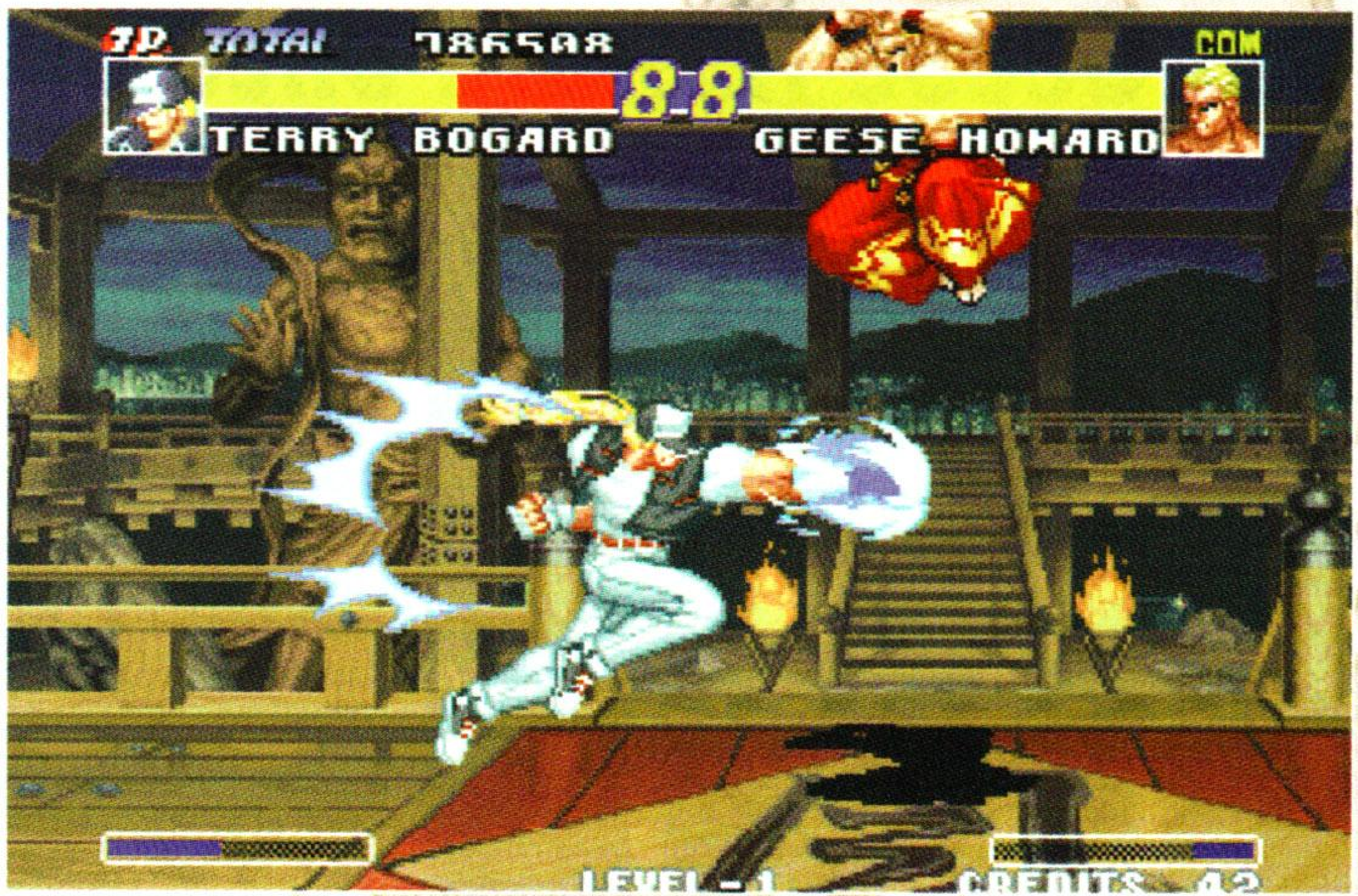

1P BEAT BY 0
CHALLENGER!! 2P
70
BOB WILSON
JIN CHONREI
UPTOWN & RIVER SIDE
4
HIT
LEVEL-1
CREDITS 36

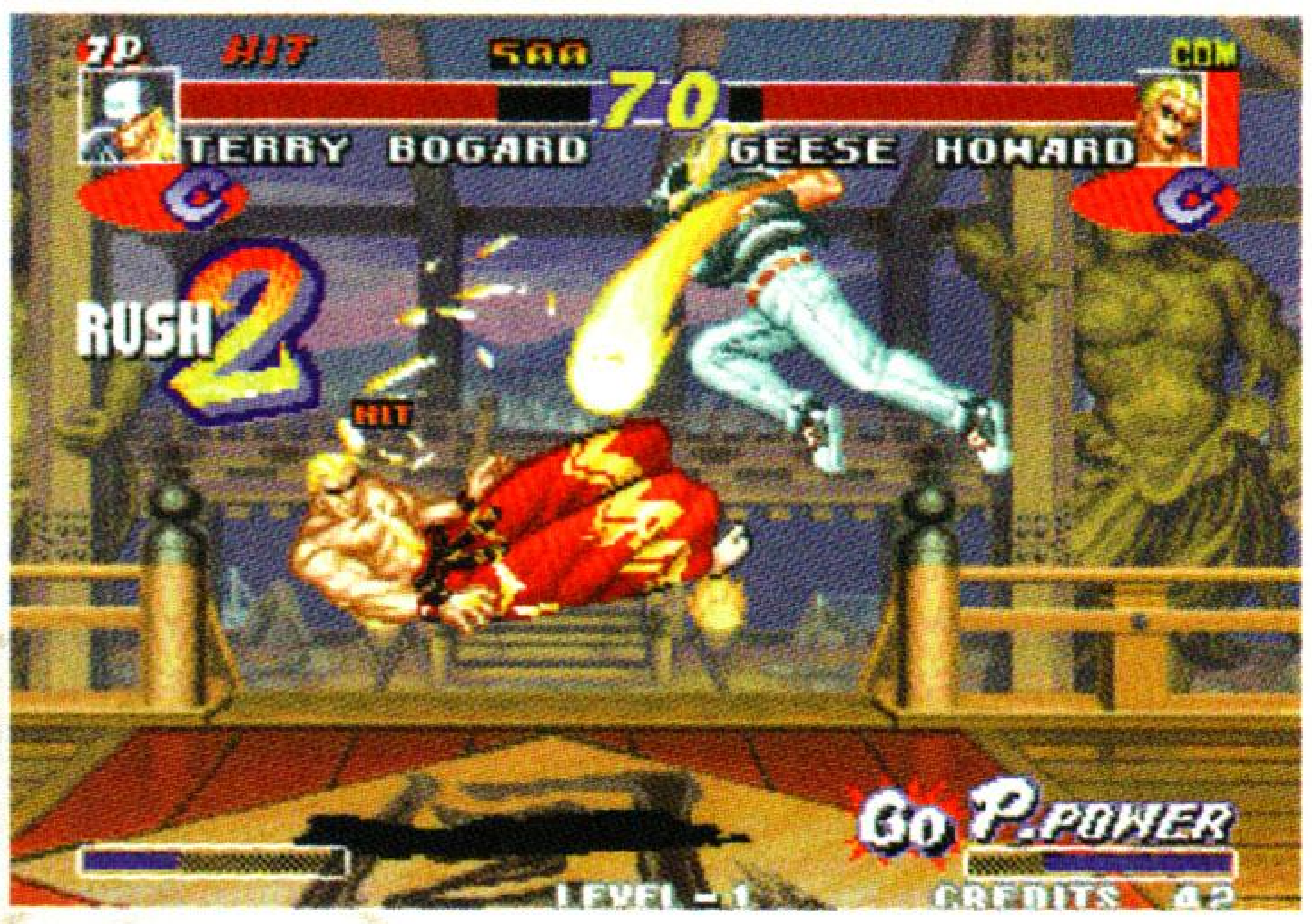
Let there be no doubt - Mr Geese Howard has returned and is seeking to destroy the Bogard brothers once and for all! This struggle between Southtown's finest fighters makes for one of the most entertaining combat games yet seen on the Neo Geo.

REAL BOUT FATAL FURY

THE FIFTH FATAL FURY IS THE GREATEST LONE WOLF SAGA YET!

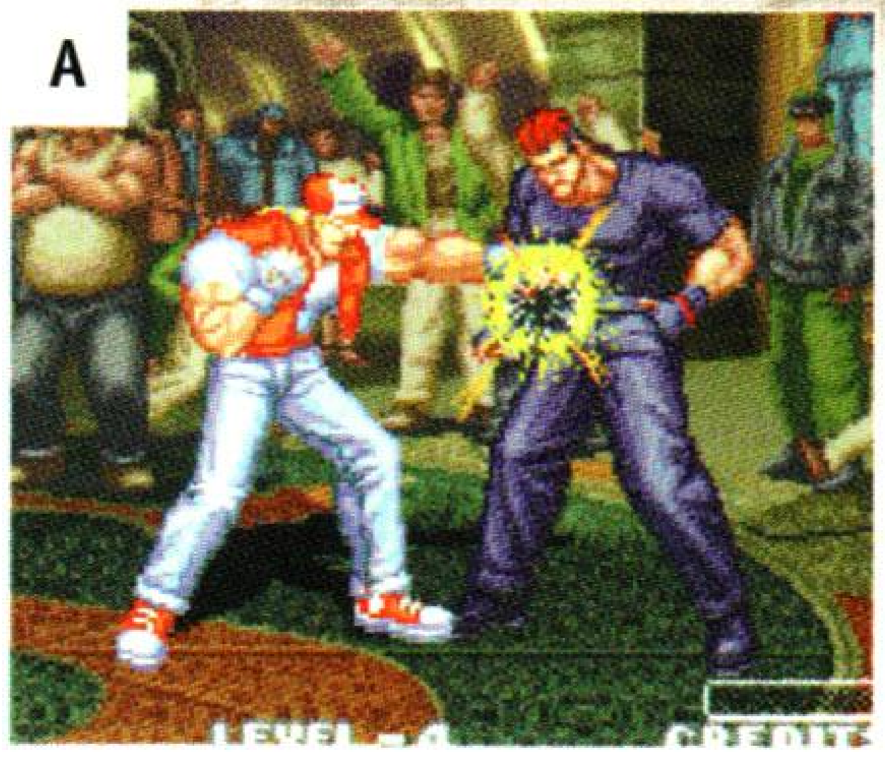
"Fifteen of Southtown's finest gather against me. Let them try and challenge my power!"

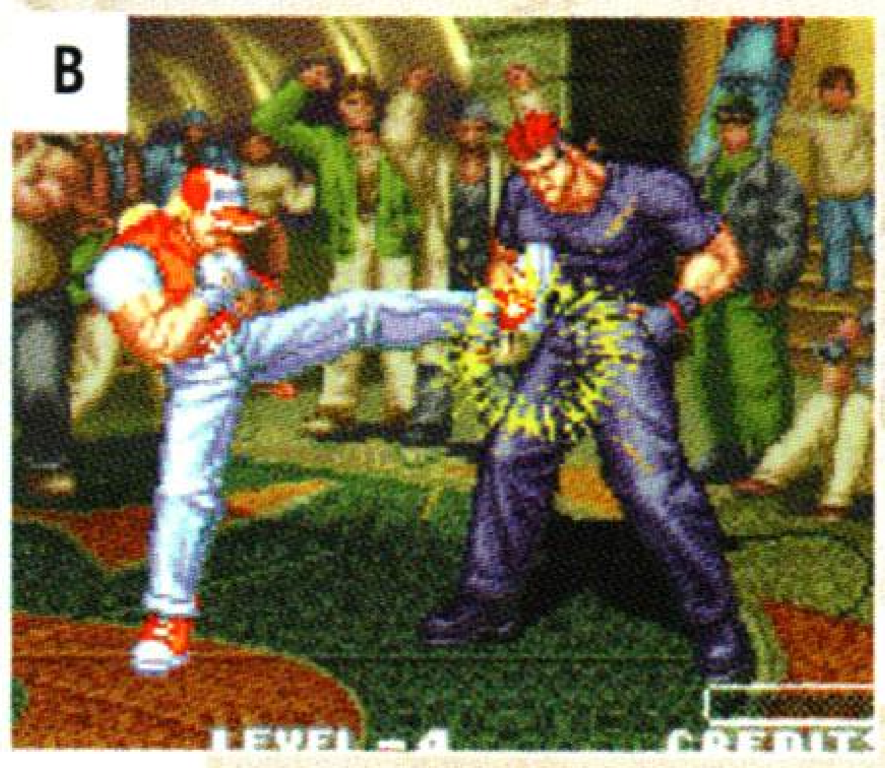


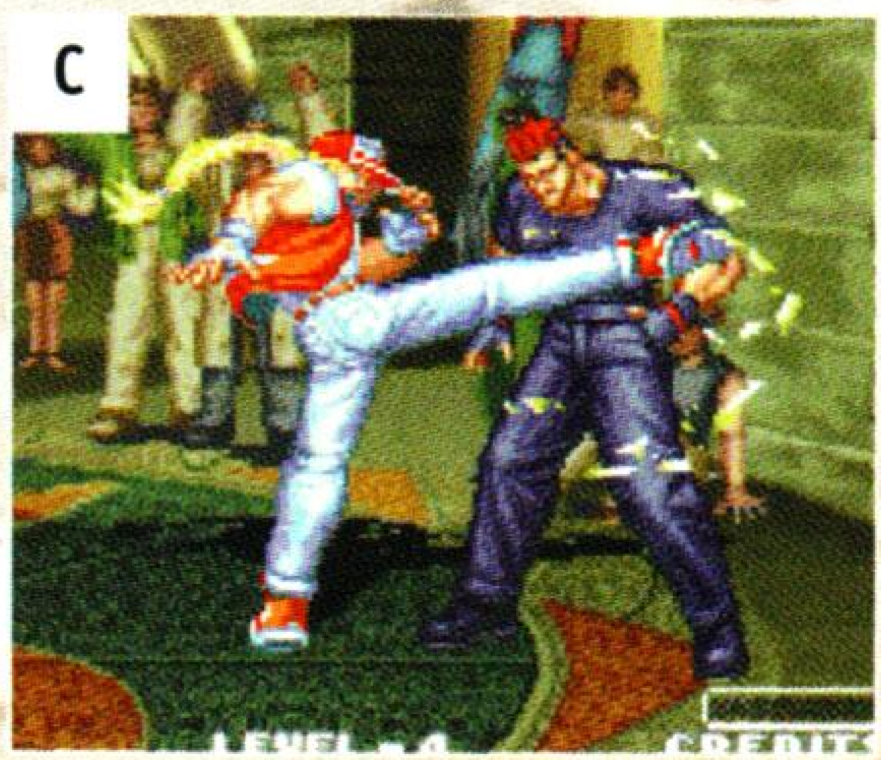


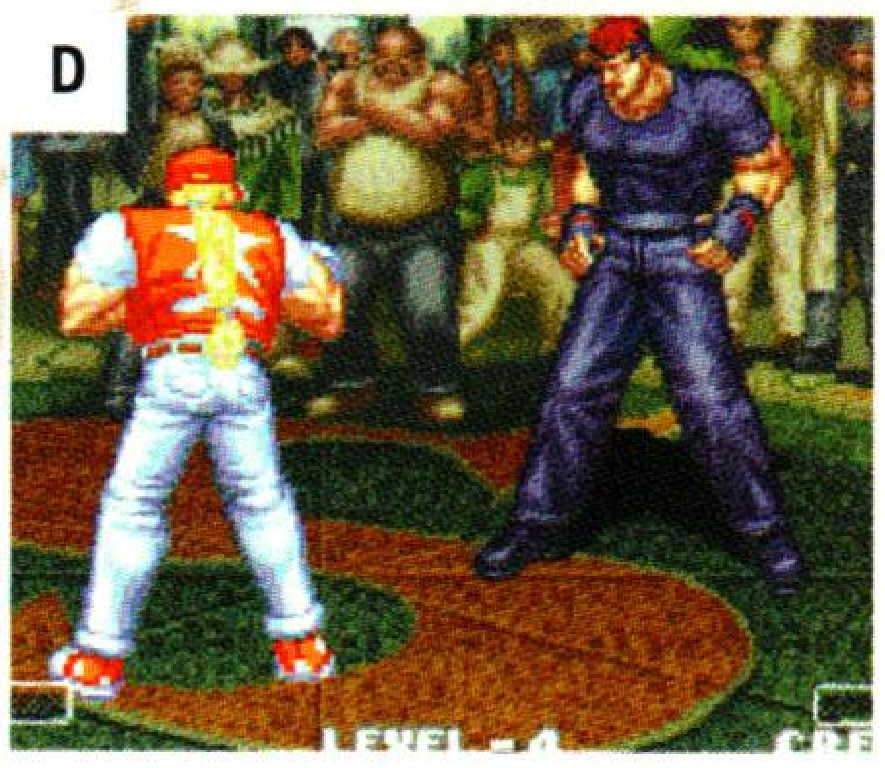
SNK know a winning formula when they market one, and the Fatal Fury series is the most obvious testament to this. The Bogard brothers and their mate, Joe Higashi, have appeared in a staggering five different Fatal Fury fighting games, complementing a variety of other characters that come and go (with some even dying, only to return again with supernatural vigour). But for the fifth confrontation, the Hungry Wolves and their brethren feature in the most well-rounded and playable Furies of all time, thanks to significant alterations to the existing fighting moves. With this in mind, **MAXIMUM** has set out to inform you of all the additions and character information in the kind of detail you'd expect. The ultimate fighting tournament beckons! This is going to be one of the most hard-fought competitions of all time!

Real Bout Fatal Fury features the usual assembled cast along with a few new faces and some characters returning after a short absence. The full compliment of Bogard associates, members of the Southtown criminal element and other more mysterious combatants are all vying for the ultimate title, and the chance to confront Mr Howard on the highest rooftop of Geese Towers. Fight across five areas of the city before taking on the might of the man with the largest trousers ever seen in a video game!









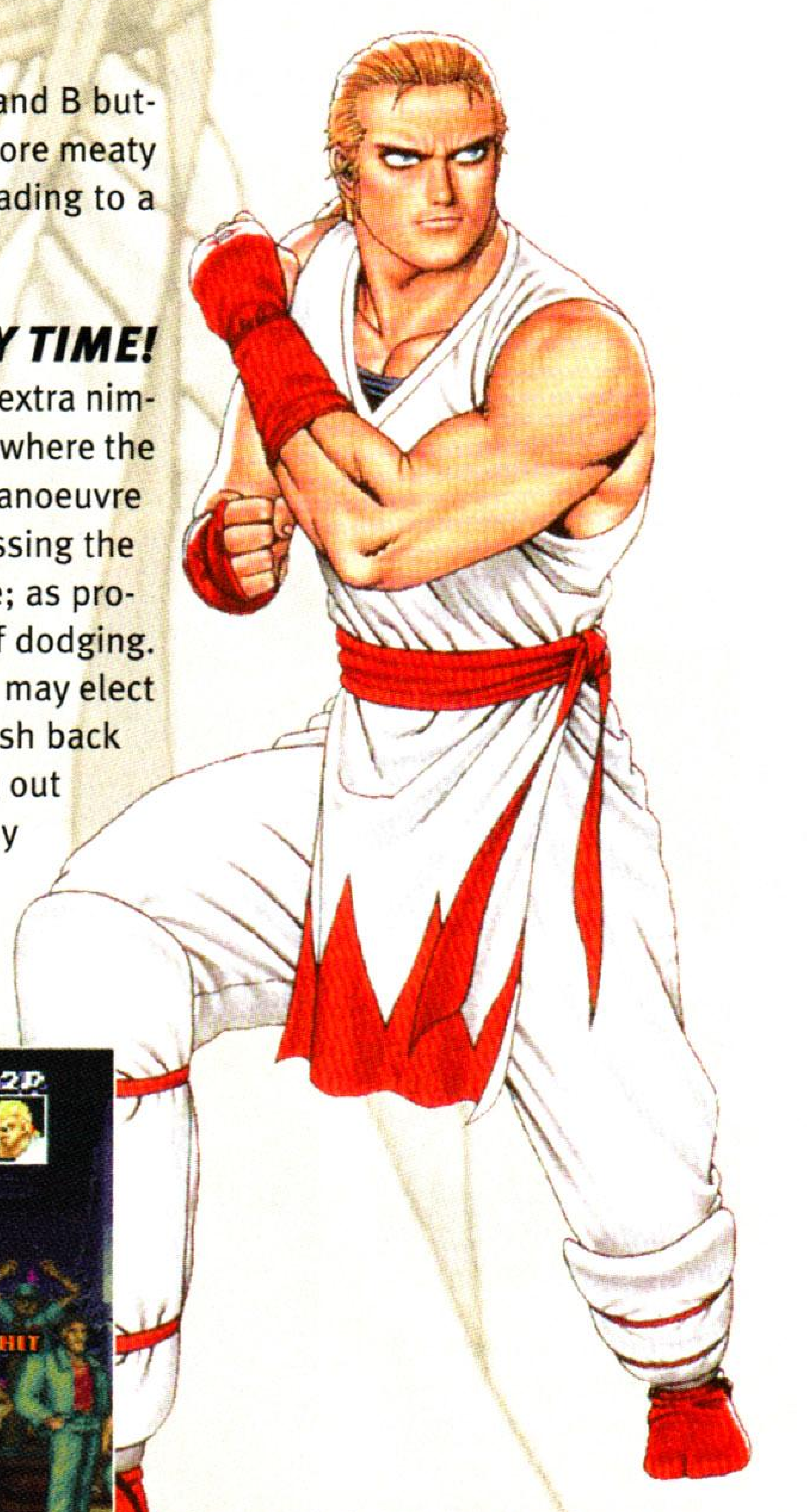
HIT FAST AND HARD WITH BASIC ATTACKS!

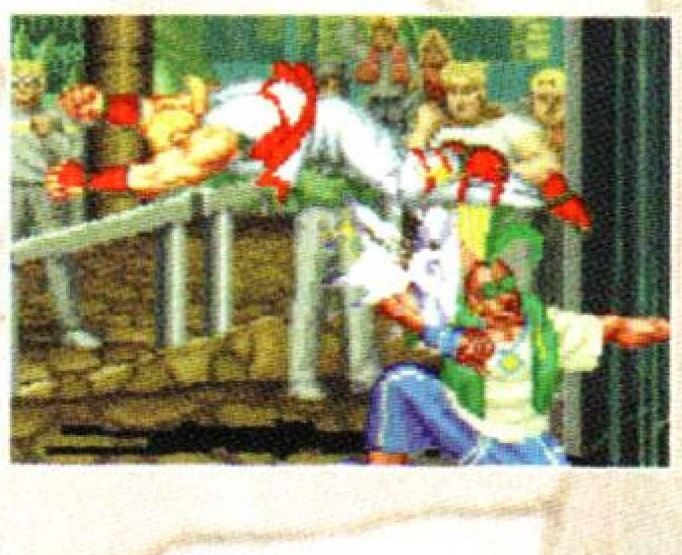
Real Bout Fatal Fury utilises the usual array of buttons found in every Neo Geo game so far. A and B buttons are used for punching and kicking respectively, whilst the C button enables a larger and more meaty 'power strike'. Finally, the D button is used to shift between the fore, mid and background, leading to a pseudo-3D battle with three plains of fighting being utilised, known as the Oversway system.

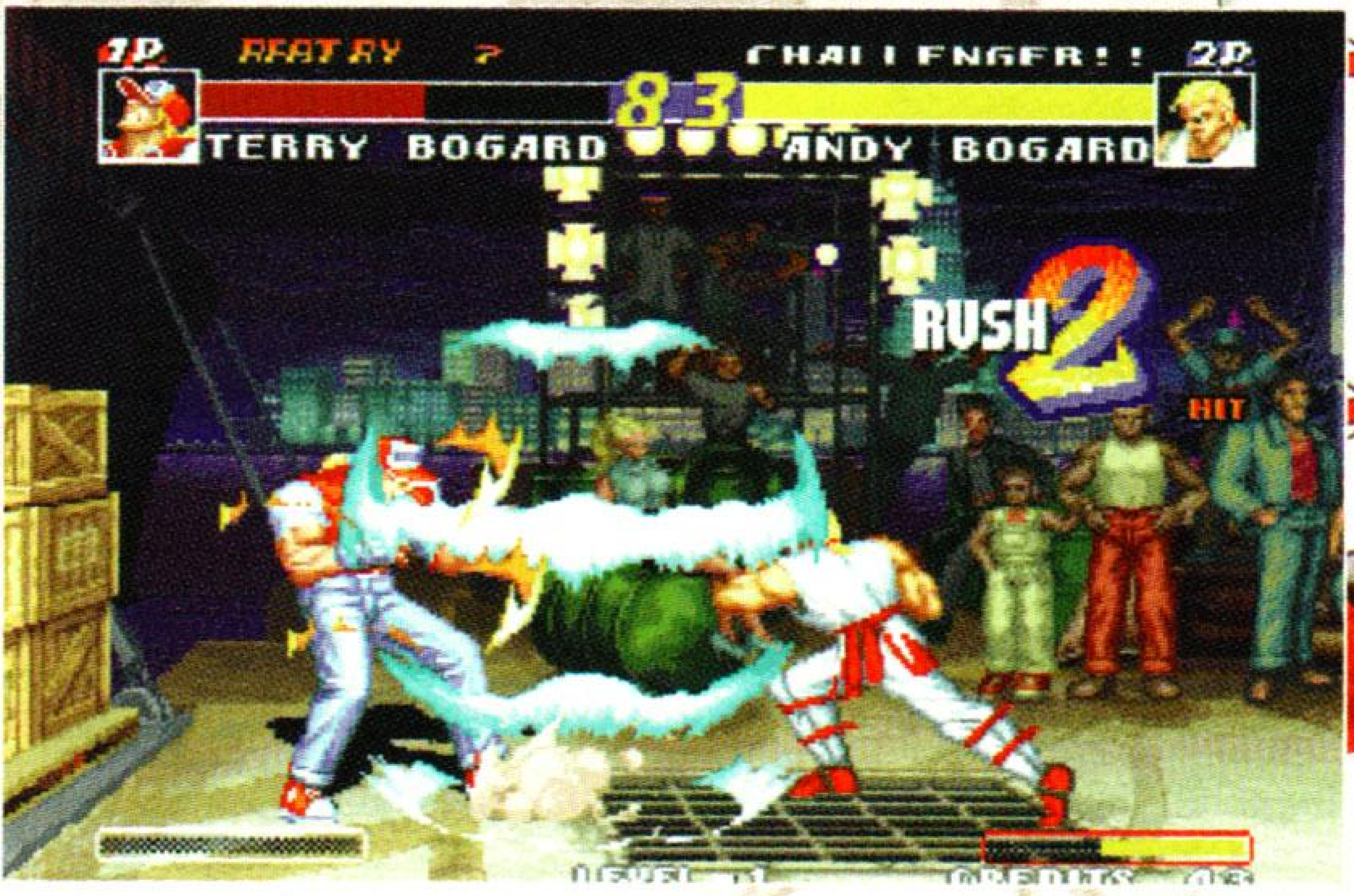
CIRCLE OPPONENTS TO DELIVER A KILLING STRIKE - IT'S OVERSWAY TIME!

The Fatal Fury developers have further refined their three tier fighting arenas to allow for some extra nimble movement about fighters. The three areas of fighting are behind or in front of the 'sway line' where the main action takes place, and these extra fighting zones are used when combatants wish to manoeuvre around an enemy for a more complex attack. When employing an oversway movement (by pressing the D button), remember that you automatically return to the sway line after a short period of time; as prolonged dodging between the different tiers would lead to rather tiresome and lengthy bouts of dodging. Also bear in mind that once swiftly passing around the enemy on one of the perimeter lines, you may elect to return into the fray at any time by pressing B again. This gives you ample opportunity to dash back into the action to deliver a well-timed strike that a foe won't be expecting. A final point to watch out for is a special attacking blow that each character possesses for an enemy on an adjacent sway line.

The actual buttons for the sway line shenanigans make such movements straightforward. To move to the background, simply press D, and to jump into the foreground, try pressing







ANDY BOGARD

BORN AND BRED FOR BOUTS OF BRAIN BASHING!

Andy departed to Japan after the last Fatal Fury bout, and continued to train as he suspected that Geese had simply disappeared and was not killed. Receiving a call from Billy Kane, he decided to leave the halls of the Fuchika Dojo to claim the scrolls whilst attempted to destroy the hated Howard. In combat, Andy has a wealth of moves and a couple of fireballs in particular that may keep opponents at bay.

The second of the Bogard brothers is back, and on this occasion his dojo training has paid dividends; as he enters the fifth Fury fight with a new fireball move (left) whilst still retaining his older techniques (far left).

FATAL FURY

FIRST IN THE FATAL SERIES

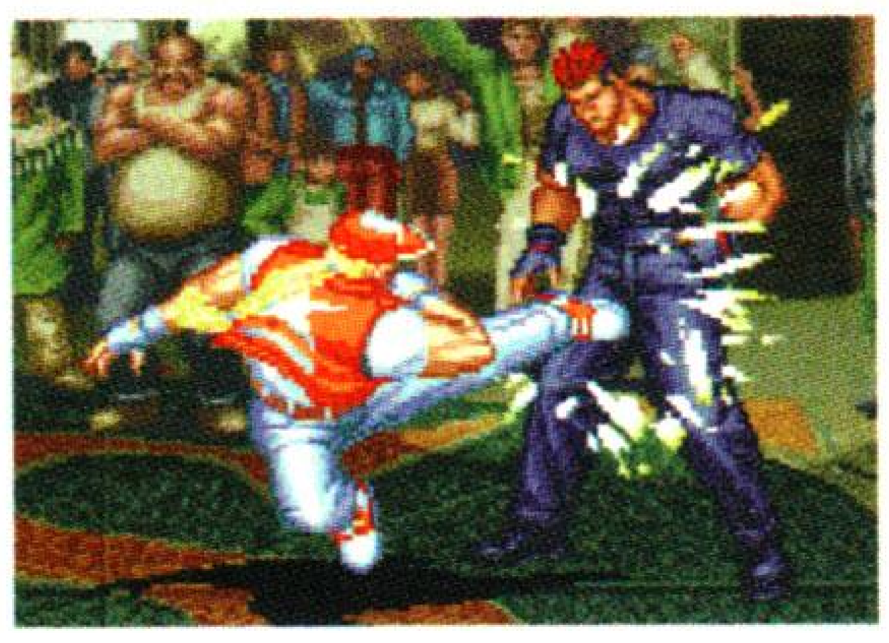
The first SNK Lone Wolf outing began way back in 1991, when Neo Geo arcade owners got the first taste of the brothers Bogard and Mr Higashi. Released after the successful Street Fighter 2, Fatal Fury was the first ever beat-em-up to 'acknowledge' the Capcom classic (indeed, some would say it 'acknowledged' Street Fighter 2 a little too closely), as it featured characters summoning magical attacks as well as relying on good old-fashioned fisticuffs.

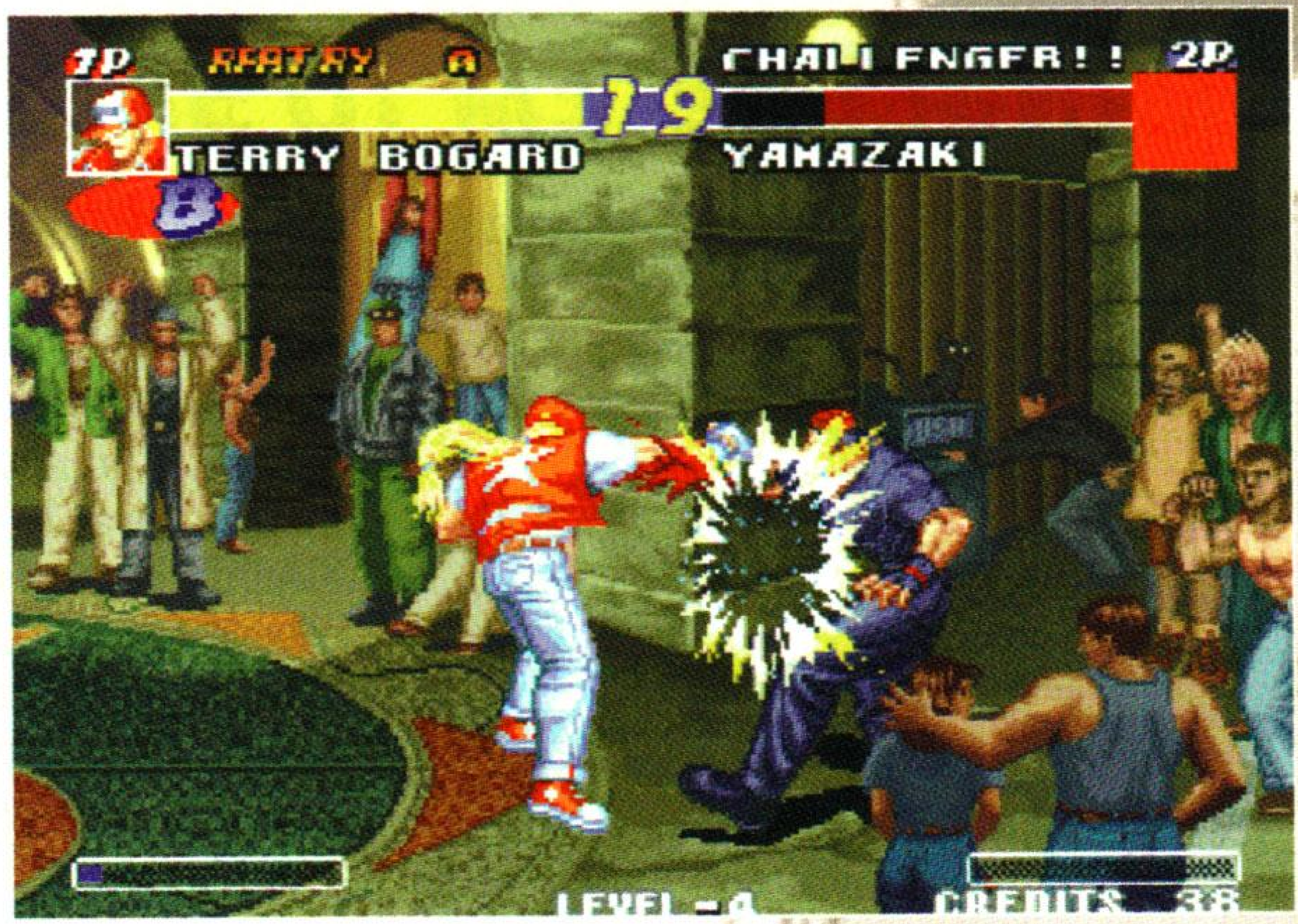
Considering that SNK's effort hit the arcades nearly a year after Street Fighter 2, it must be said that although the game won a niche of fans the world over, the game couldn't really compete in terms of playability. Actually sitting down to play this game, **MAXIMUM** was surprised at how slow the first game is, but the main shock came with the number of selectable characters. Only the fabled three heroes can be selected, and must battle their way through four initial stages (facing Tung Fu Rue the ineffectual old man and Michael Max the appalling boxer) before taking on the game's more dangerous foes, such as Raiden the fairground giant. The final confrontation is with Mr Howard, who pops up throughout the game to offer mocking words from his office suite.

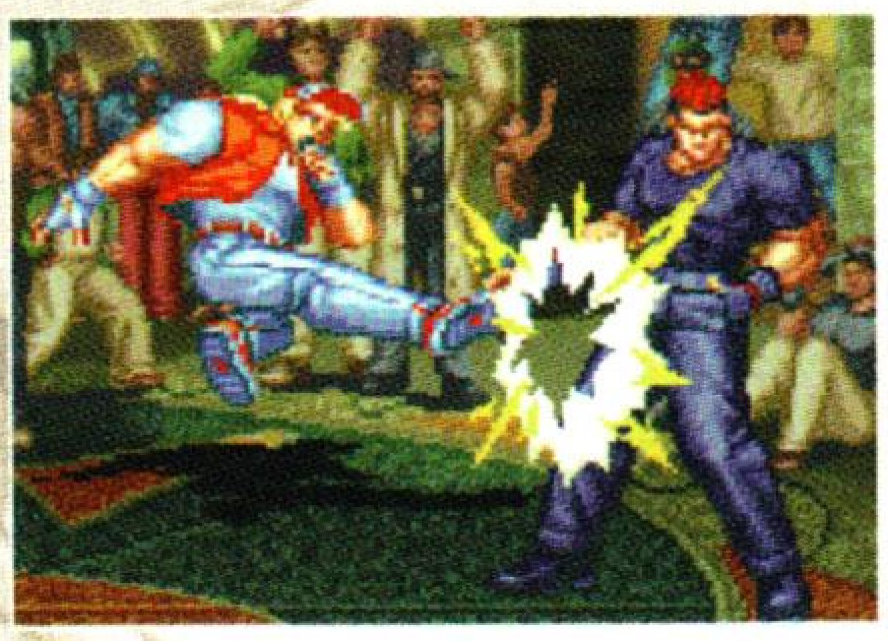
The only main point in this game's favour is that two of the characters may team together to take on a computer opponent in a three-player frenzy, and the game also tries to offer something else new with a two-tier playing arena, but the slow action and the disgracefully difficult fireball motions make special moves something of a rare occurrence. A great trip down SNK memory lane, but a game that shows how far beat-em-ups have progressed in the last five years.

★★

Both Terry and Ryuji demonstrate the Oversway system in their subway bout. A bewildered Ryuji looks on as Terry launches attacks from the foreground (below left and middle) as well as from behind (below right).



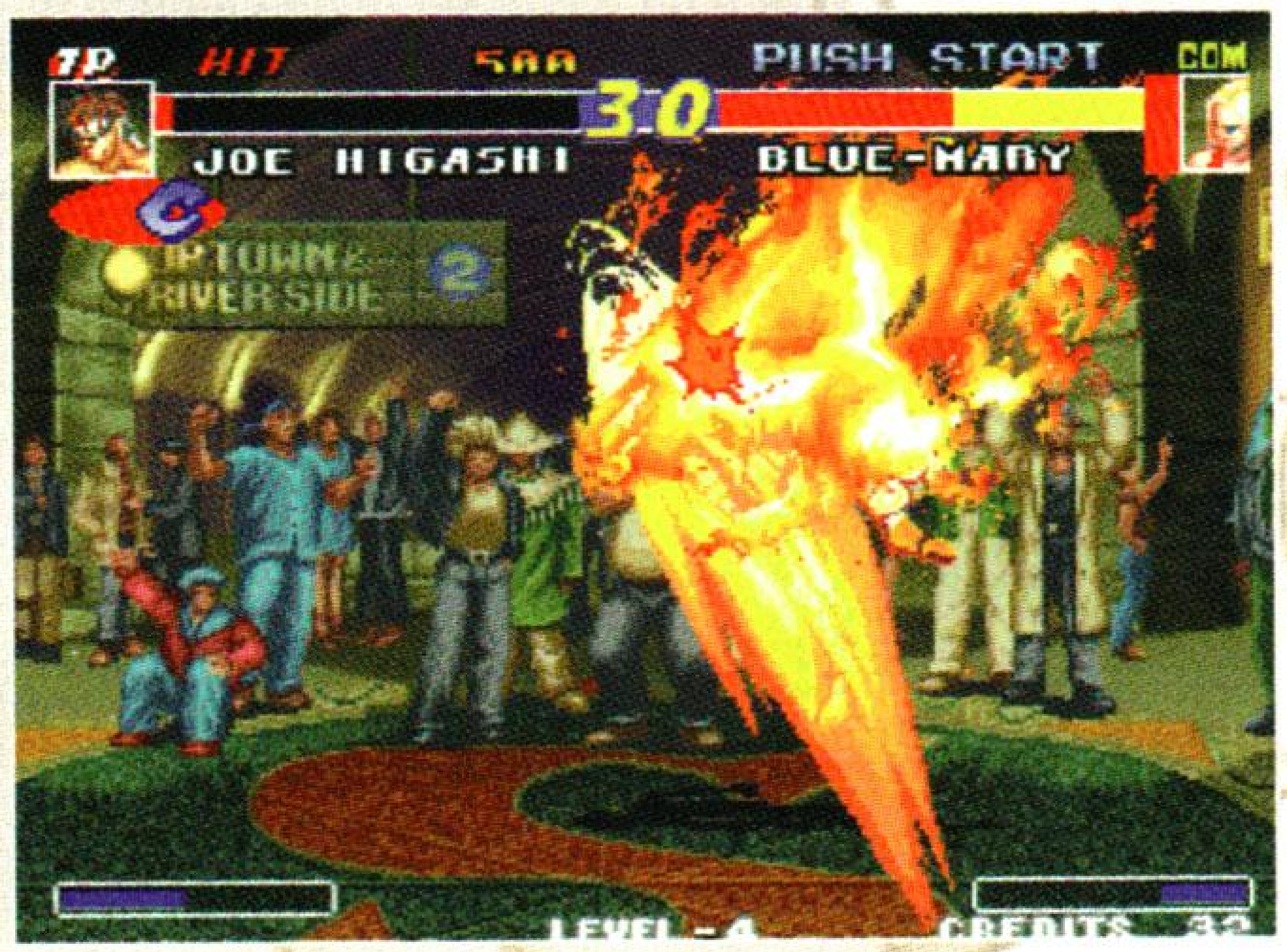


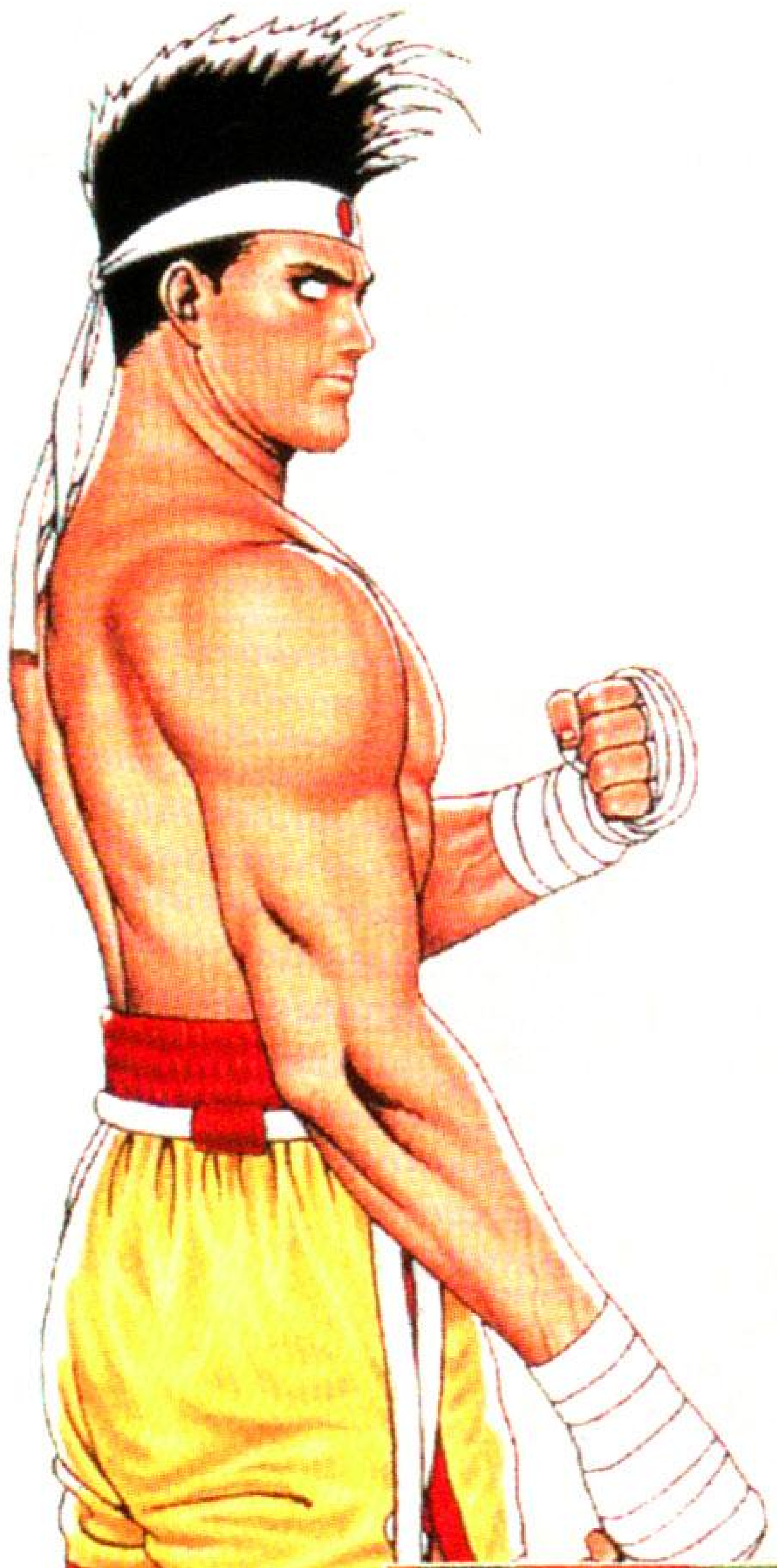


"My mighty Super Death blow will smash your face in completely! Still standing eh? Then prepare yourself for my incredible Potential Power attack!"

down and D. You may also time your move so that after you've received a knockdown you move between sway lines whilst rolling to recover.

To attack an opponent from an adjacent line, simply execute a normal attack while you dart between the lines to meet your attacker. Finally, you can inflict pain from a normal position on an opponent behind or in front of your line attack by pressing D when nearby. Once you've mastered these Oversway techniques, the whole of Southtown will tremble at the sight of your burning rage!

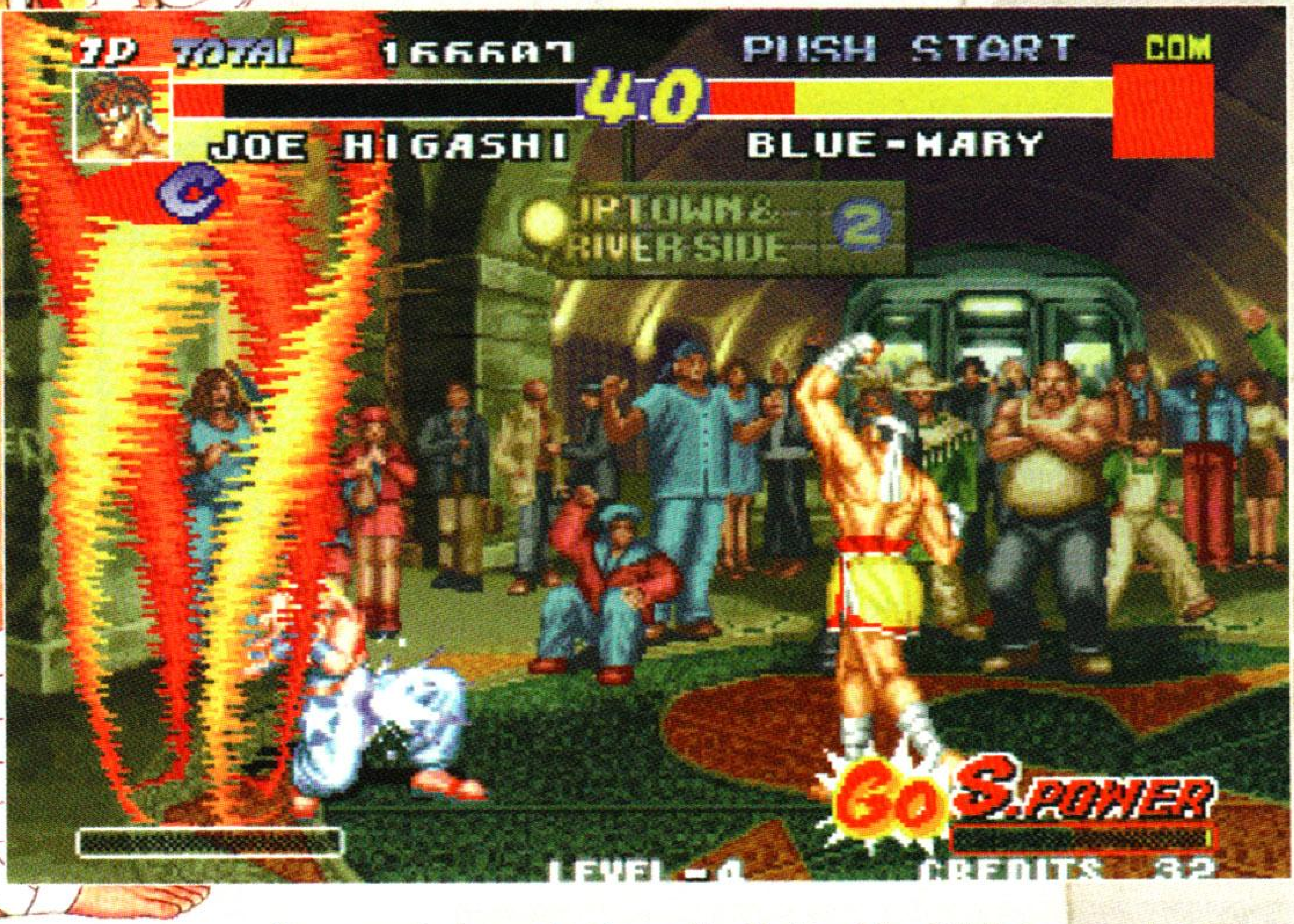




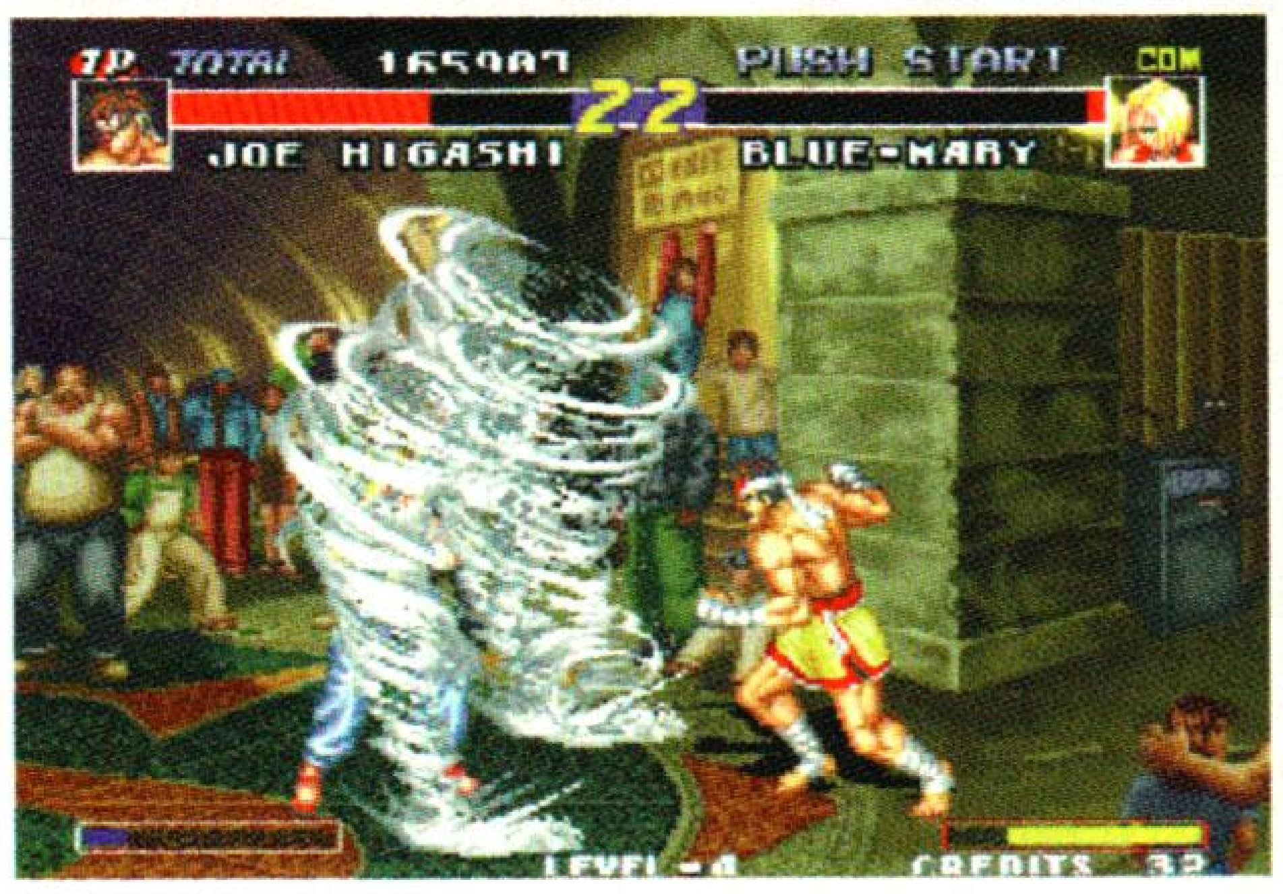
ACHIEVE TRUE MASTERY WITH THE POWERFUL DEATH BLOWS OF DOOM!

The trademark over-the-top specials are back, and this time they're easier to achieve, thanks to an SNK rethink after many people complained that previous super attacks resulted in hand dislocation. There are two different special power attacks for each character, and these are used to inflict hideous damage, or simply to impress. The two attacks are the Potential Power moves and the Super Death Blows, and the key to attempting either of these attacks lies in the character's energy bar and the power gauge at the foot of the screen.

The character's energy bar is known as the two-level gauge, as after a number of hits the gauge changes from a yellow to a flashing red colour. The super specials can be attempted when your characters power meter is charged to the maximum (while the GO! sign is flashing), but the type of special available is dependent on your health rating. Go for the Super Death Blows when your health bar is coloured yellow, and try the Potential Power moves after you've received damage that takes your health bar into the red. Once you've remembered the moves and when to execute them, your gameplay should improve considerably. Opponents become very cautious when confronted with a Fatal Fury expert who can summon great powerful magical attacks to aid him in battle!



No one can be in any doubt regarding Mr Higashi's whirlwind-summoning skills. A hapless Blue Mary receives a double dose of windy action from the third Lone Wolf.



JOE HIGASHI

THE CUNNING KING OF KICK-BOXING!

An excited Mr Higashi returns from a Thai Boxing championship to face the might of Geese Howard once more. Earning the title Hoa Shai, he failed to beat the grand master and returns to help the lone wolves. Once accustomed to a less honourable battle, Joe retains as much power as ever before, and whirlwind attacks are devastating to both ground-based and jumping foes.

FATAL FURY 2

SECOND IN THE FATAL SERIES

By 1992, SNK had given a lot of thought to a Fatal Fury sequel, and one was duly dispatched into arcades to steal some more limelight away from the continuing success of Street Fighter 2. There was a general feeling amongst arcade goers that the first Fatal Fury, although entertaining and diverting for a while, was never going to reach the same status as the exalted Capcom classic, so SNK developers sat down and planned a much more playable sequel.

Thankfully, the number of characters selectable had been extended to eight, and all of them received a full compliment of moves and fought with a much greater fluidity than in Fatal Fury. Some of the more cynical games players pointed out that these eight bore more than a passing resemblance to Ryu and his chums, but the actual game itself played a little differently. For a start, the magical attacks were much more flamboyant, and the two parts of the fighting arena were much more accessible than before. Thankfully, some of the first game's more useless characters were sent packing; and as such, Mr Max and Raiden trudging off into beat-em-up oblivion.

Fatal Fury 2 still wasn't as playable and lacked some of the polish of Street Fighter 2, but was sufficiently entertaining enough to draw some crowds to the SNK cause. For the time, some of the backgrounds looked fantastic (a particular example being the multi-scrolling parallax water backdrop on Mai's stage), and the greater interaction with scenery was also a bonus.

★★

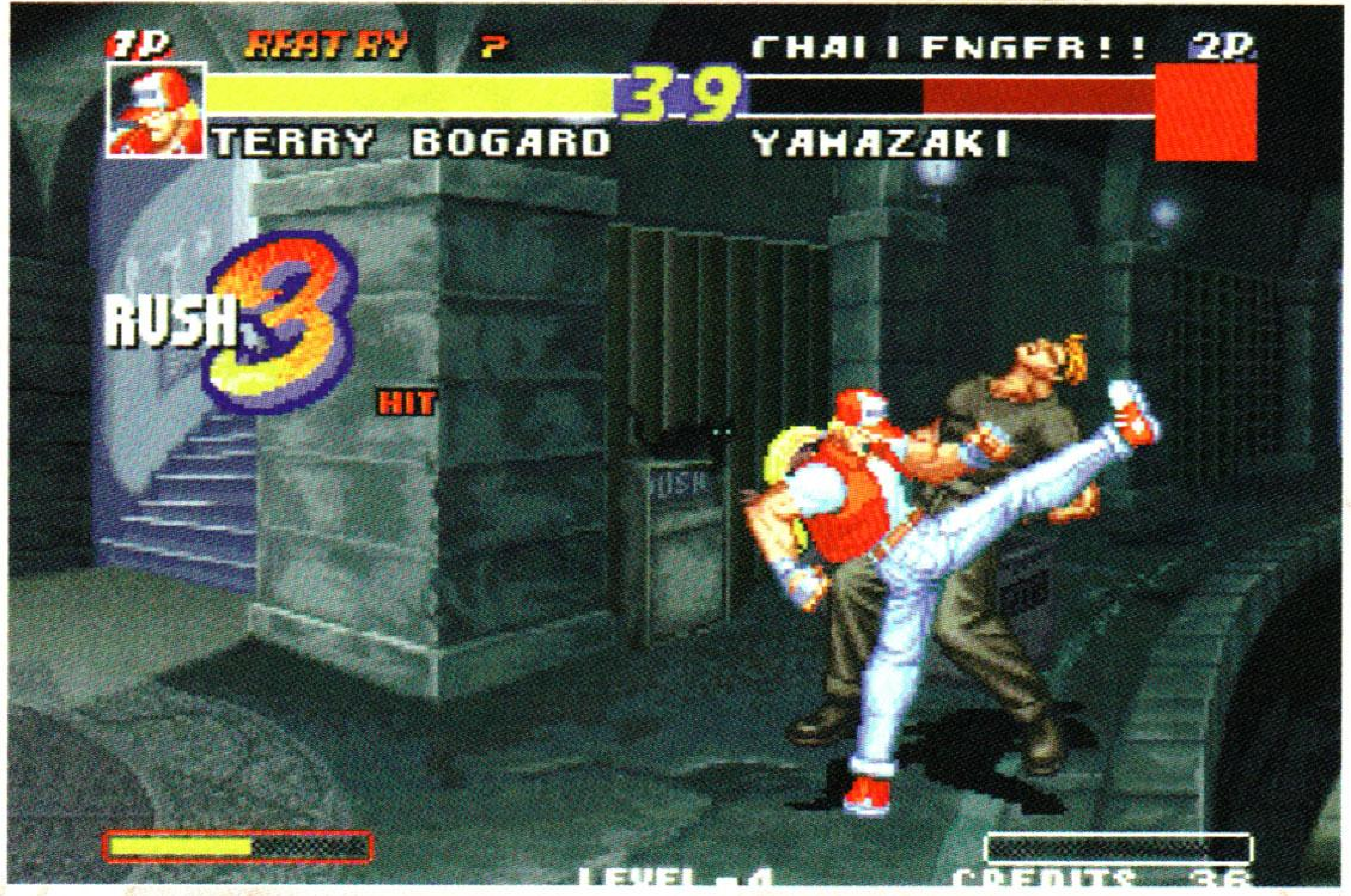
JOE HIGASHI
76
KIM KAPHWAN

PUSH START
TERRY BOGARD
57
JUBEI YAMADA

REAL BOUT
FATAL FURY

NEW FEATURES KEEP ON COMING! USE 'EM TO BRUISE 'EM!

Terry Bogard finishes off a simple multi-hit combo on an unguarded Ryuji. This is the end of Terry's A + B + C basic combination, and the way to more complex combo mastery. Try A + C + C + C + C for another unique Terry combination.



FATAL FURY SPECIAL

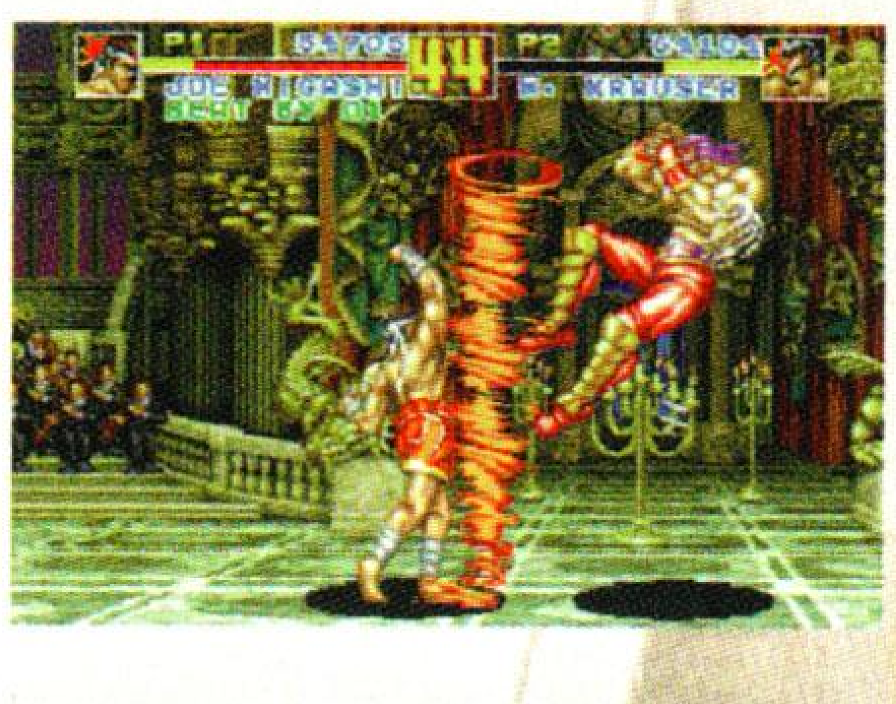
THIRD IN THE FATAL SERIES

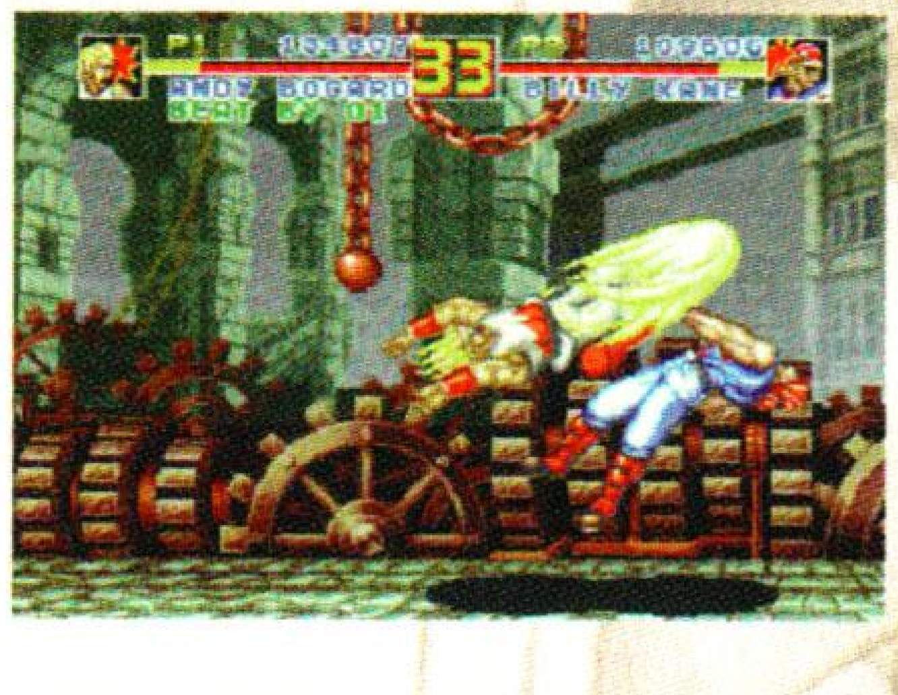
Another year and another Fatal Fury beat-em-up. The fighting game players were beginning to see through SNK's attempts at weaning Street Fighter veterans away from the Capcom machine and onto the SNK cabinets with promises of greater characters and exciting special moves. This third Fatal Fury beat-em-up tweaked the gameplay of Fatal Fury 2 only very superficially, and the main selling point lay with the number of combatants available.

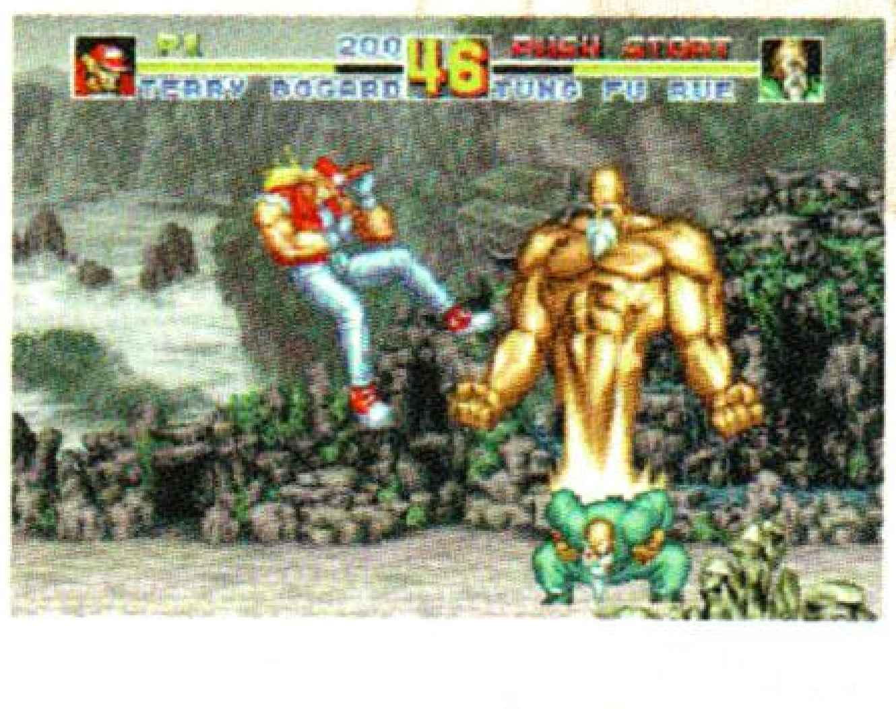
The first Fury gave punters a miserly three fighters, whilst the second improved somewhat with eight, but SNK got rather carried away with it all and ended up including 15 selectable characters; the most ever seen in a beat-em-up at that time. The elderly gentleman Mr Tung Fu Rue made a timely appearance, along with the Spanish bullfighter known as Laurence Blood and a number of others, and Mr Howard was elbowed from his boss chair to make way for the dramatic and overly enraged Wolfgang Krauser.

Special moves now looked more impressive (as you can tell when comparing screenshots), and the whole game ran at a more hectic pace, which was an added bonus.

★★★





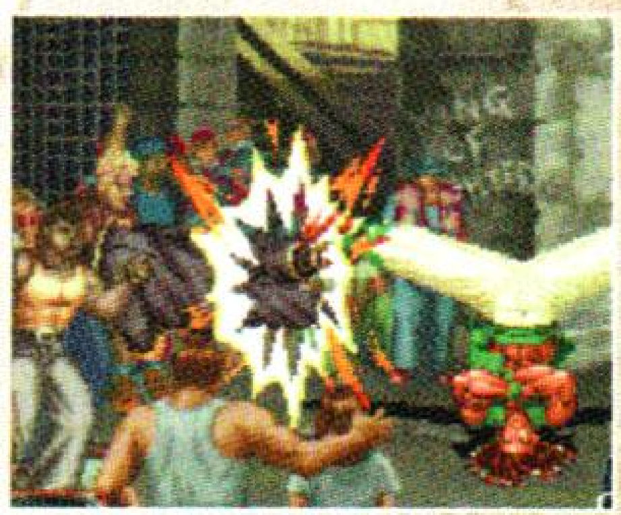


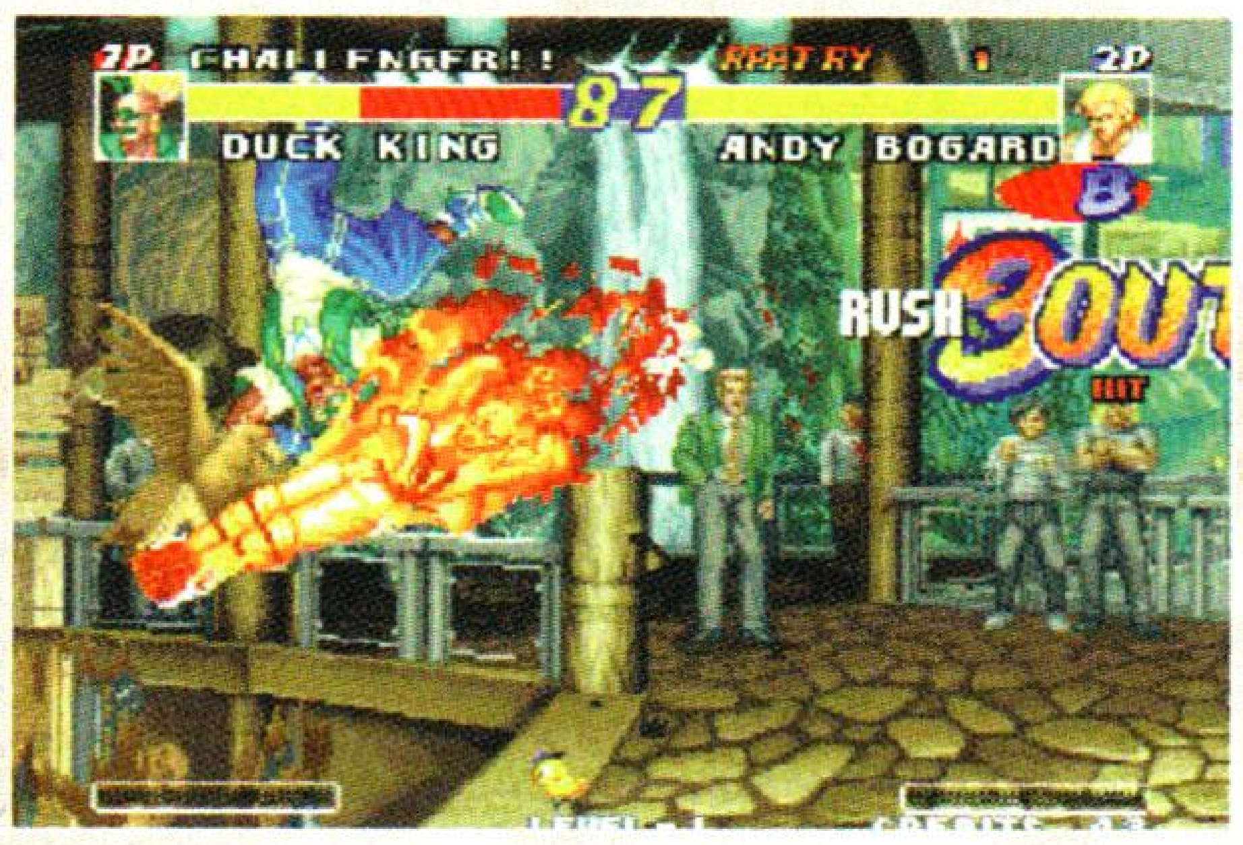
MULTI-HIT MAYHEM!

Following on from the additional combination attacks of previous Fatal Furies, each of the sixteen characters has a number of multiple chained attacks that experts may get to grips with. When properly executed, these combos prove to be devastating and inflict wanton amounts of carnage, and these attacks are the key to maximising your combat potential. To start you off, here's a simple chaining combo that all the characters possess: Simply press A, B, and C after each other. After this, you should try to experiment with differing attacks until true Fatal Fury mastery is yours!

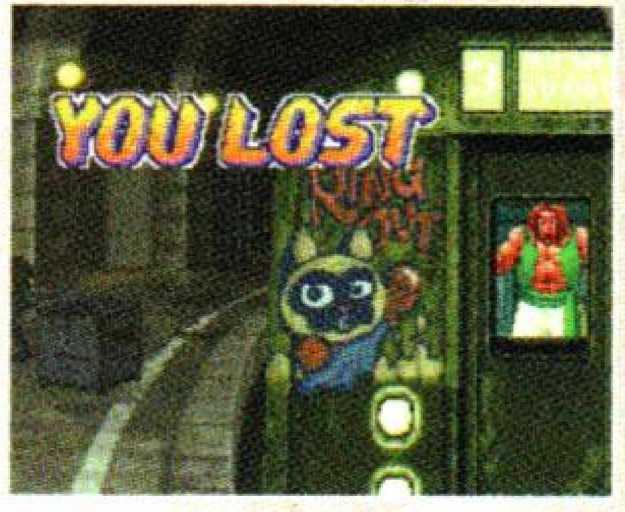
ALL-NEW RIP-ROARING RING OUTS!

At the edge of the fighting arenas on four of the five stages are a variety of barriers. By pinning your opponent to the edge of these arenas, you may strike through them and damage the scenery. Gradually, pieces fall away from these barricades until nothing remains, and this gives a cheap and cheerful character the opportunity to strike a foe out of the arena in a blaze of cheesy techniques. Various humourous endings occur after this knock out, such as the victim staggering onto a cargo ship, or falling into some attractive purple water. You can even hoof an enemy onto a passing tube train, or into some electrified scaffolding, so win that round by any means necessary!

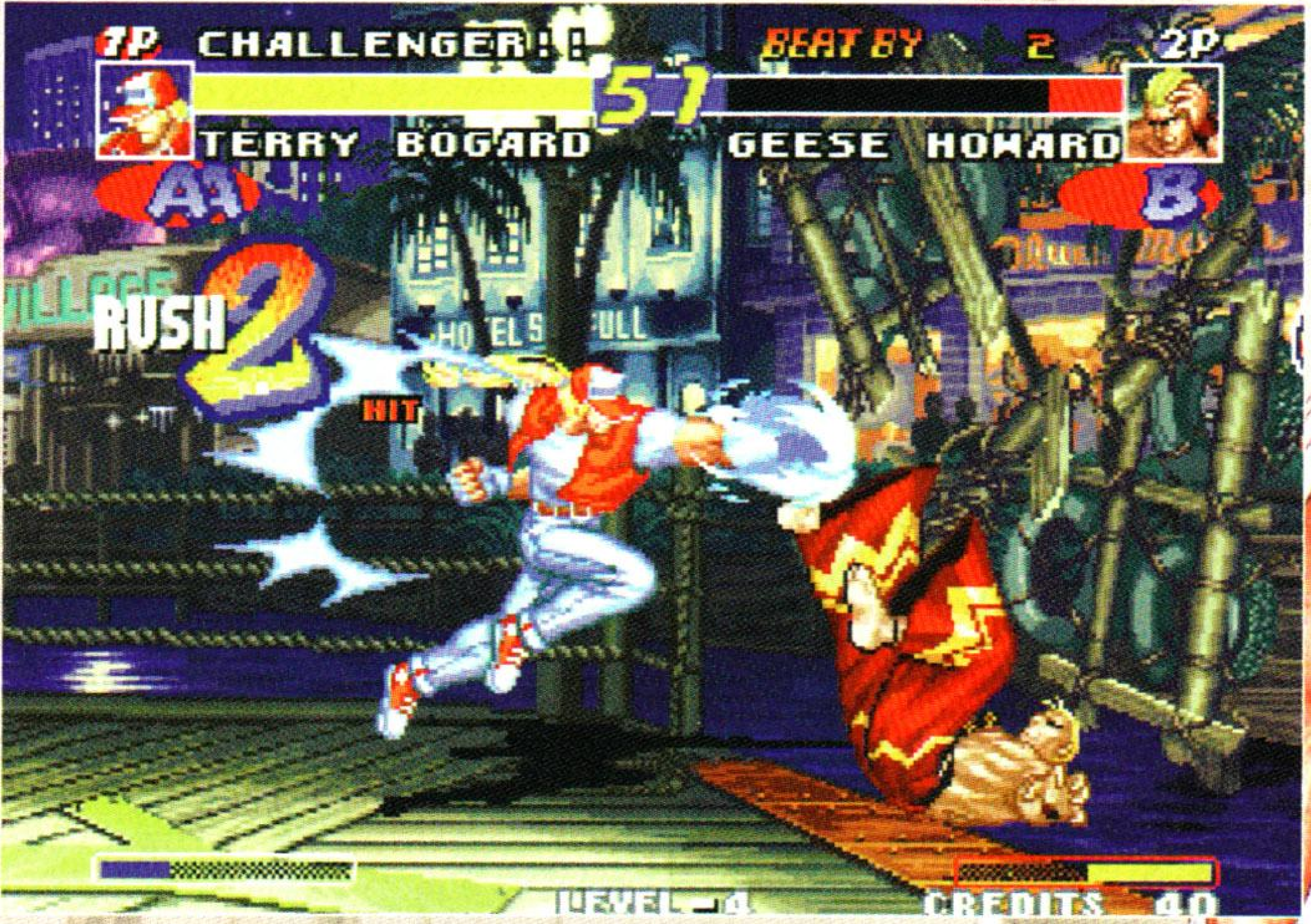




Andy and Terry both score a win over their enemy by repeated pummelling until a ring-out is scored. This is a cheese supreme victory, but looks fantastic!



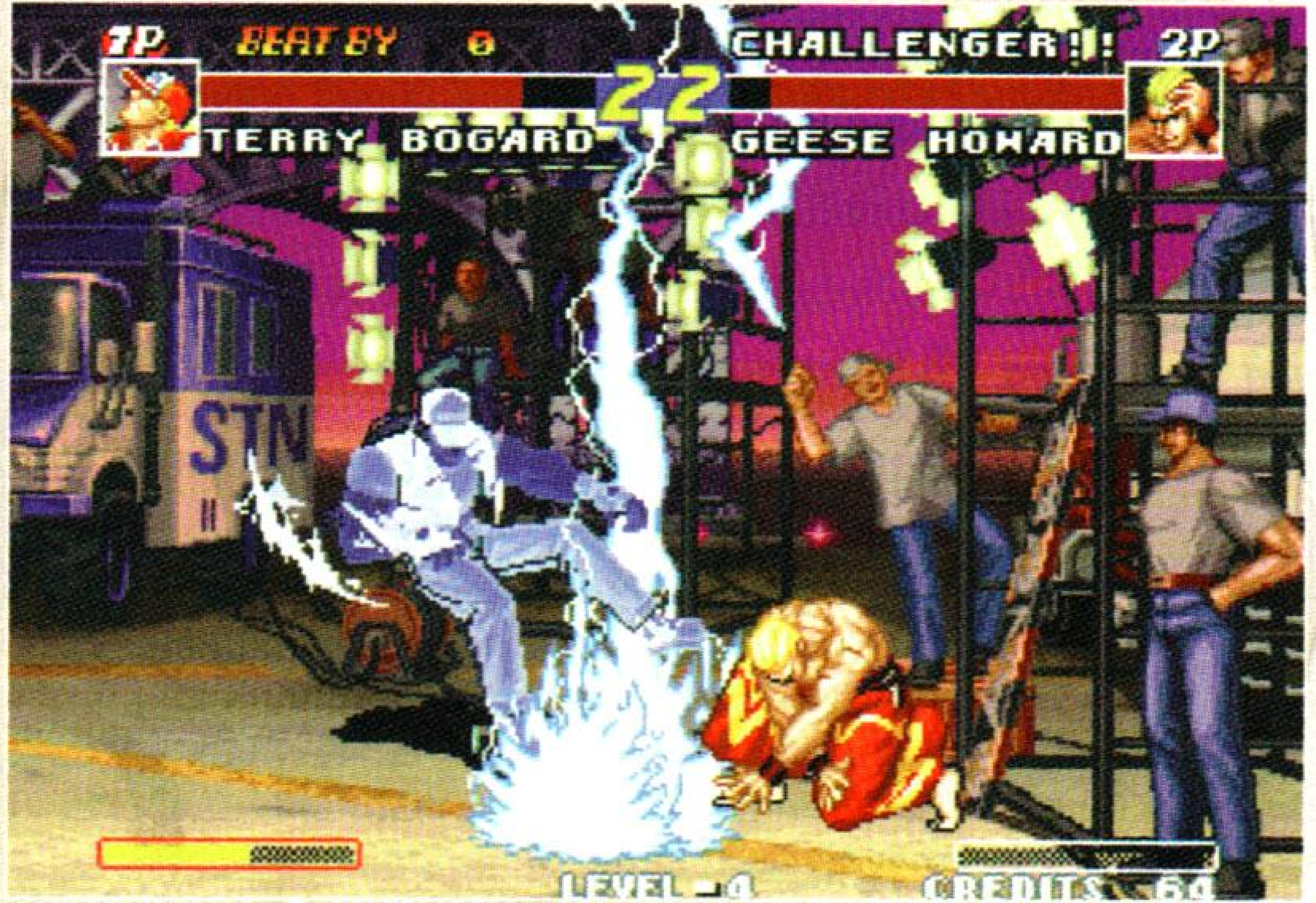
Crowds of cheering fight fans act as the ring ropes on the subway stage. Hit them too hard and they'll move out of the way. As demonstrated by a swift moving Bob Wilson who spins a little too frantically, and succeeds in falling out of the ring... and onto a passing tube train!



EXTRA FEATURES FOR FIERCE AND FURIOUS FIGHTING!

MID-AIR MANOEUVRES - When taking to the skies in the middle of a melee, your character may now elect to either block or turn (features that were not present in previous Furies) and these techniques add substantially to a player's repertoire, making bouts a lot more fraught than they were previously. Blocking in mid-air is simply achieved (by blocking, obviously), whilst the airborne turn is a change of direction once a jump has started. The benefits of these two manoeuvres is obvious; and the mid-air turn is particularly useful as a player may jump over an enemy before switching direction and launching a descending airborne attack.

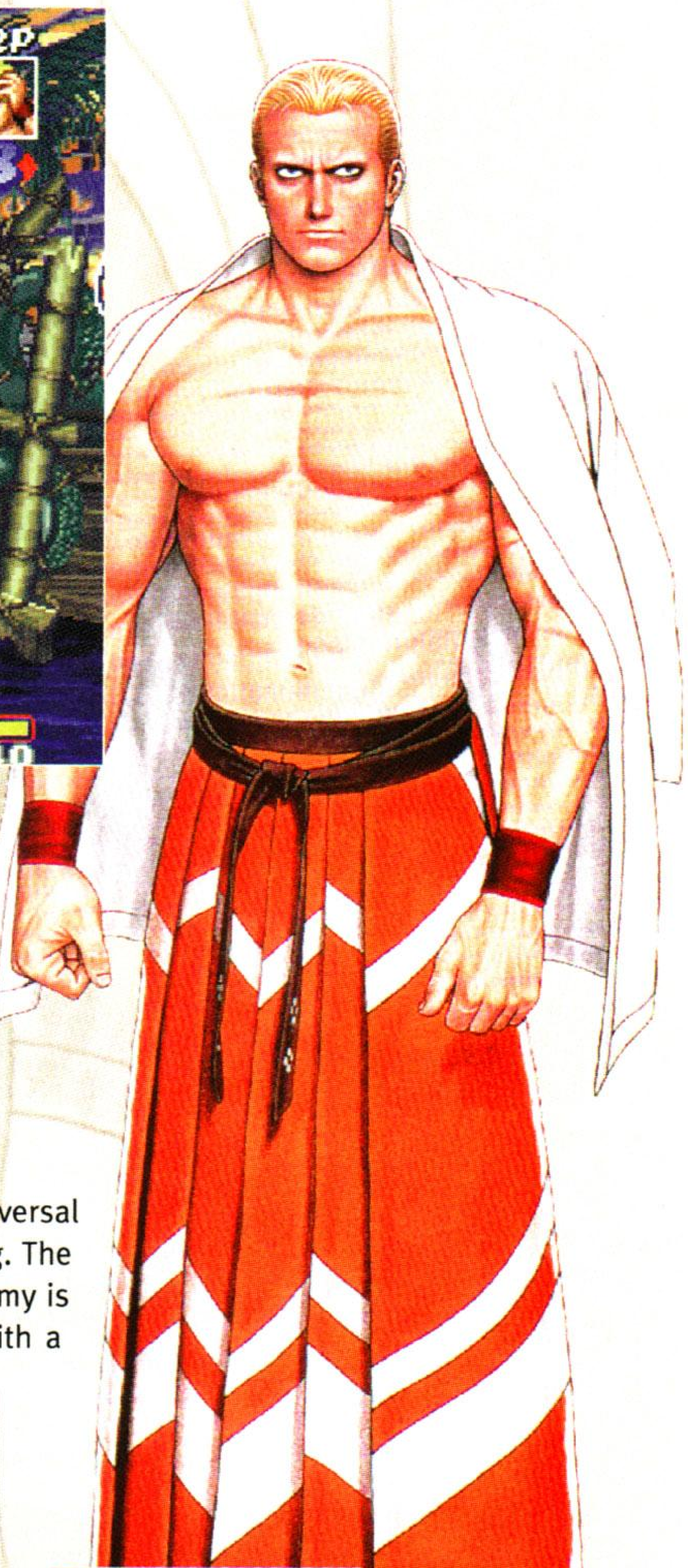
REVERSALS - Real Bout Fatal Fury is the first of the Hungry Wolf games to feature the popular reversal technique, where a player avoids an enemy attack by launching into his own with careful timing. The stress here is on the actual timing itself, as you must begin your reversal attack just as the enemy is about to connect. A correctly timed reversal results in a message indicating success along with a stunned and bleeding enemy! With careful practice, you may

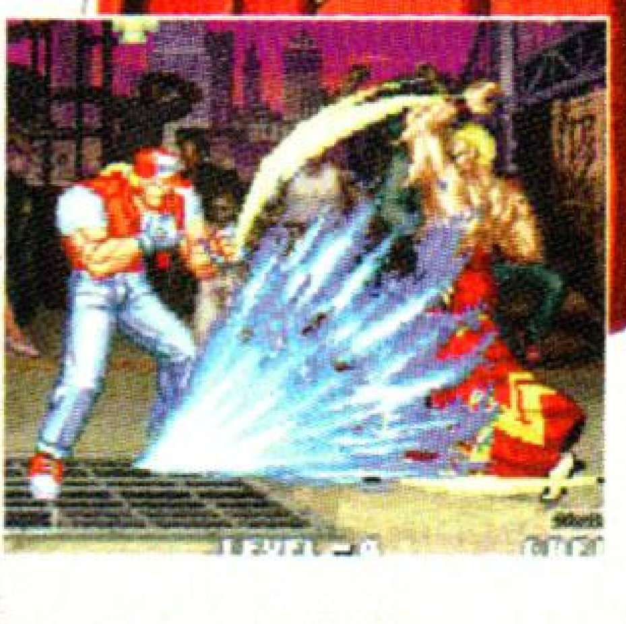


GEESE HOWARD

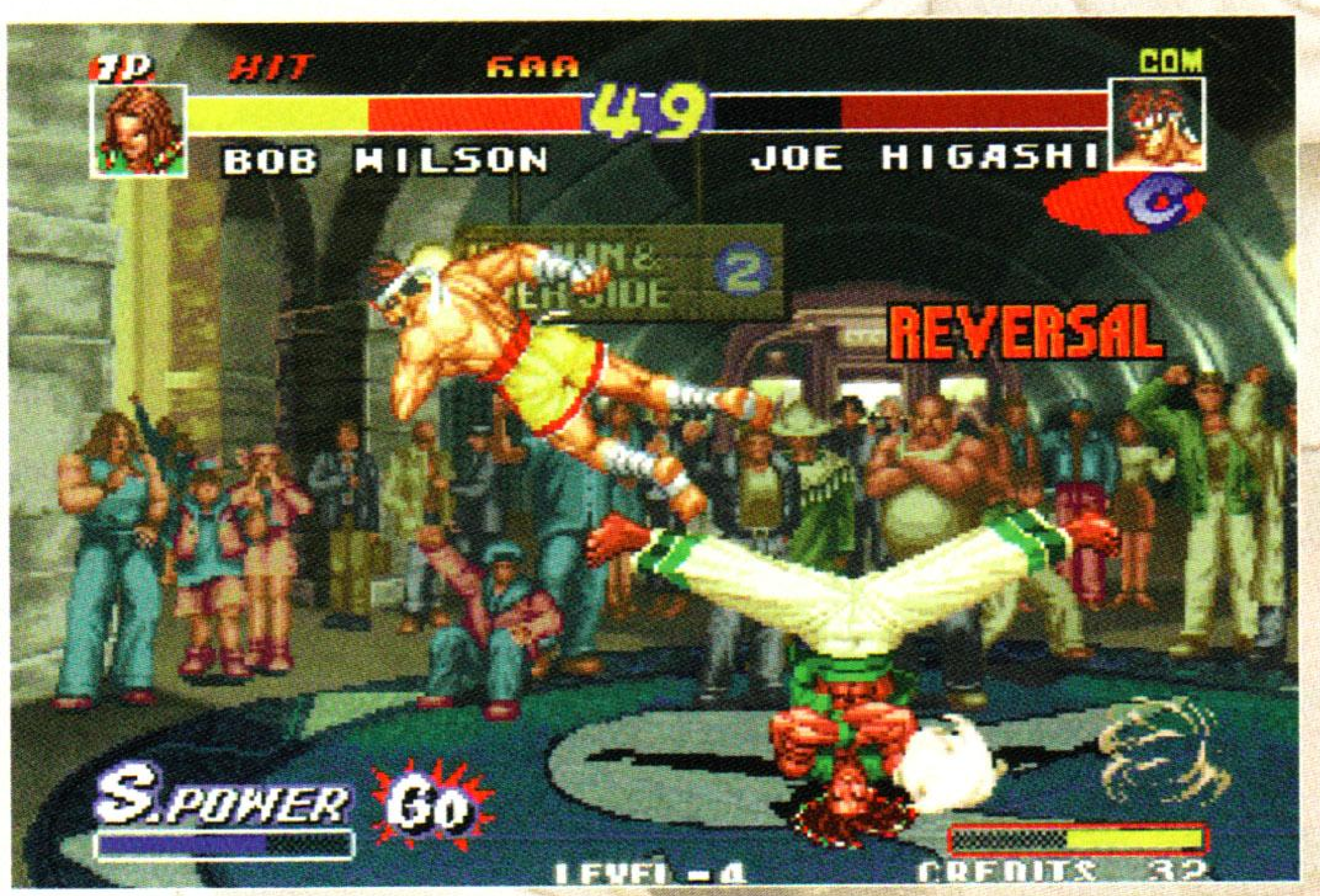
BACK FROM THE DEAD TO RETAKE HIS THRONE!

Now almost entirely insane, Geese Howard is desperate to prove both his combat worth and his hold over Southtown. Stepping out of his suit and into his fabled ceremonial dress, Geese surveys the ongoing ultimate combat competition with interest. He knows that Terry will face him, and then his objectives will be met: Terry shall be crushed, and the Qin scrolls shall vanish forever! To help him in this task, Geese employs an array of extremely hard-hitting manoeuvres including the Double Reppu Ken which can flummux most opponents with lesser projectile-based attacks.

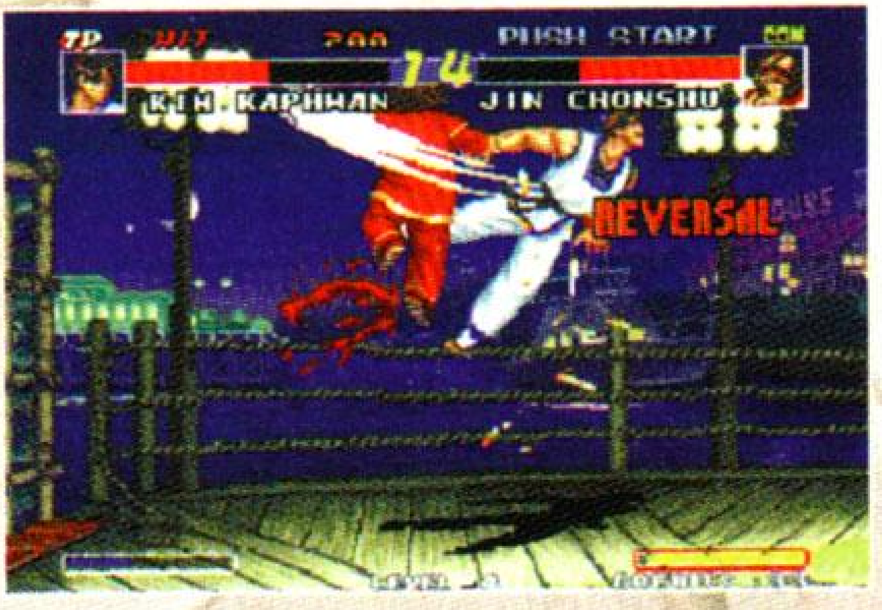




Geese Howard in full effect! Geese's double fireball attack (above) is one of the most useful attacks for keeping an opponent at bay.



Spectacular reversal attacks are another feature of a Neo Geo title that looks to be just another fighting title on the surface. Delve deeper, and you'll find one of the most in-depth beat-em-ups ever seen! There's simply so such to discover that you'll be playing this for months!



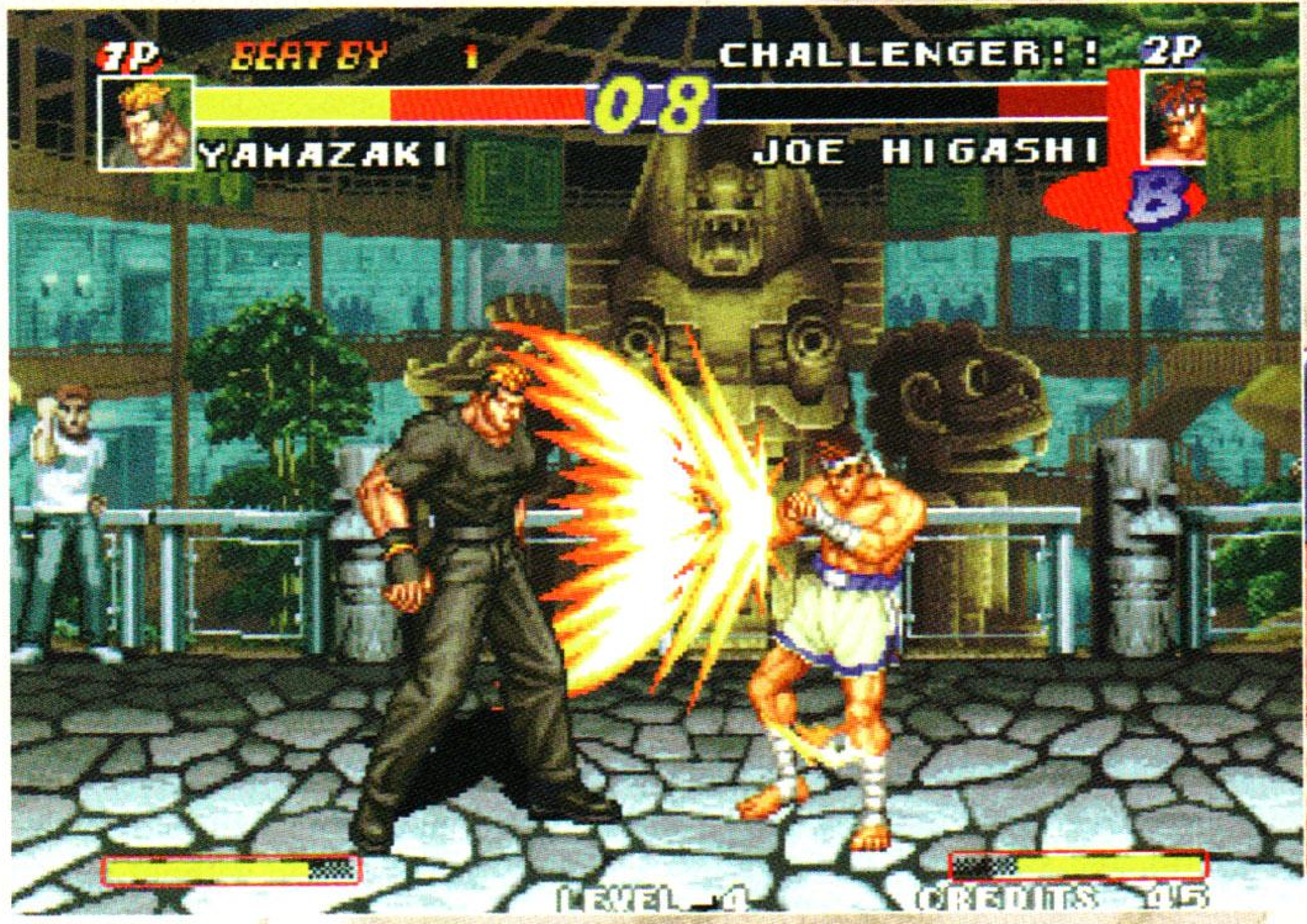
counter anything an opponent throws at you, but your timing must be unbelievably accurate to avoid embarrassment.

THROWING BONANZA! - A final rethink has resulted in each of Real Bout's contestants learning at least two throws each, whilst some contestants have become throwing legends with up to five different grappling techniques. Geese Howard in particular has All are remarkably simple to achieve (by pressing C or D plus a direction), but be warned; most are reserved for kings of cheesy techniques only! For some reason Richard's name suddenly springs to mind.

GRADE YOU FIGHTING STYLE WITH THE RATING SYSTEM!

The last Fatal Fury title introduced a marking system for all the fighting bouts. Whenever a round was won, the victor was awarded a grading, and this ranged from the truly masterful 'SSS' to the cheap and dirty 'E' grade with various other grades of excellence in between. Not only did this resolve disputes between warring players who complained of cheesy tactics, but the rating system was also the key to locating hidden fighter contained in the previous Fury game. The rating is calculated on the score and time taken to beat your opponent regardless on what techniques you use. Now Real Bout Fatal Fury has arrived, and the ratings system has survived intact, leading to even more fraught confrontations. With the usual finishing mark being around the 'A' grade, there is enough scope to better your techniques and achieve a master's 'SSS' victory. Who knows, there might even be the possibility that the ratings system may hold the secret to revealing other hidden combatants...

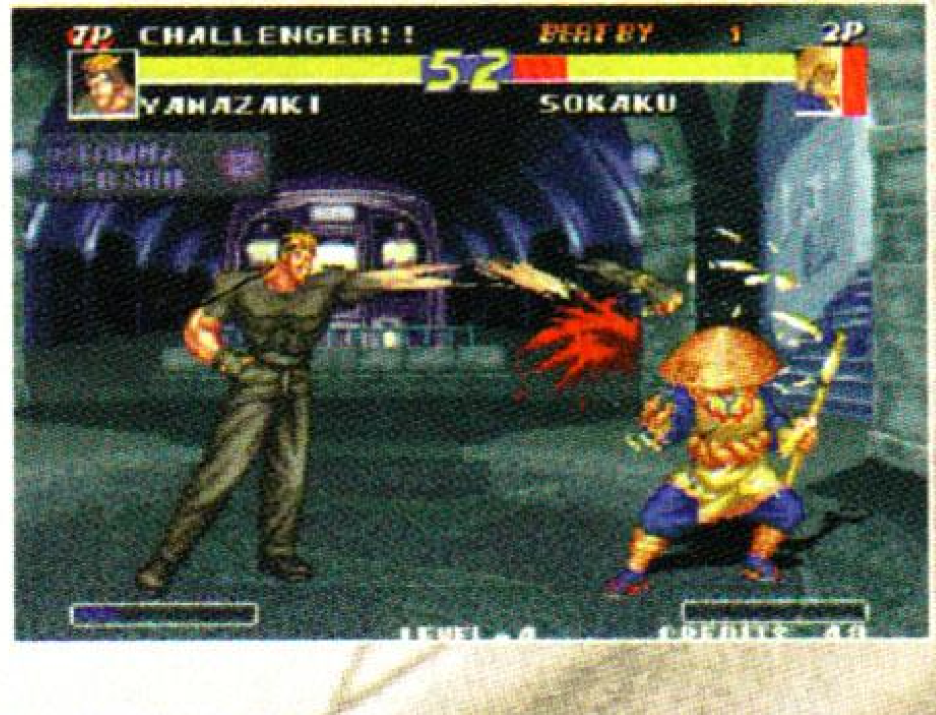
> *"If you're a wimpy cheesemeister like Richard then go for the cheap ring-out! Real masters finish with style! Play with skill and earn a triple 'SSS' rating!"*

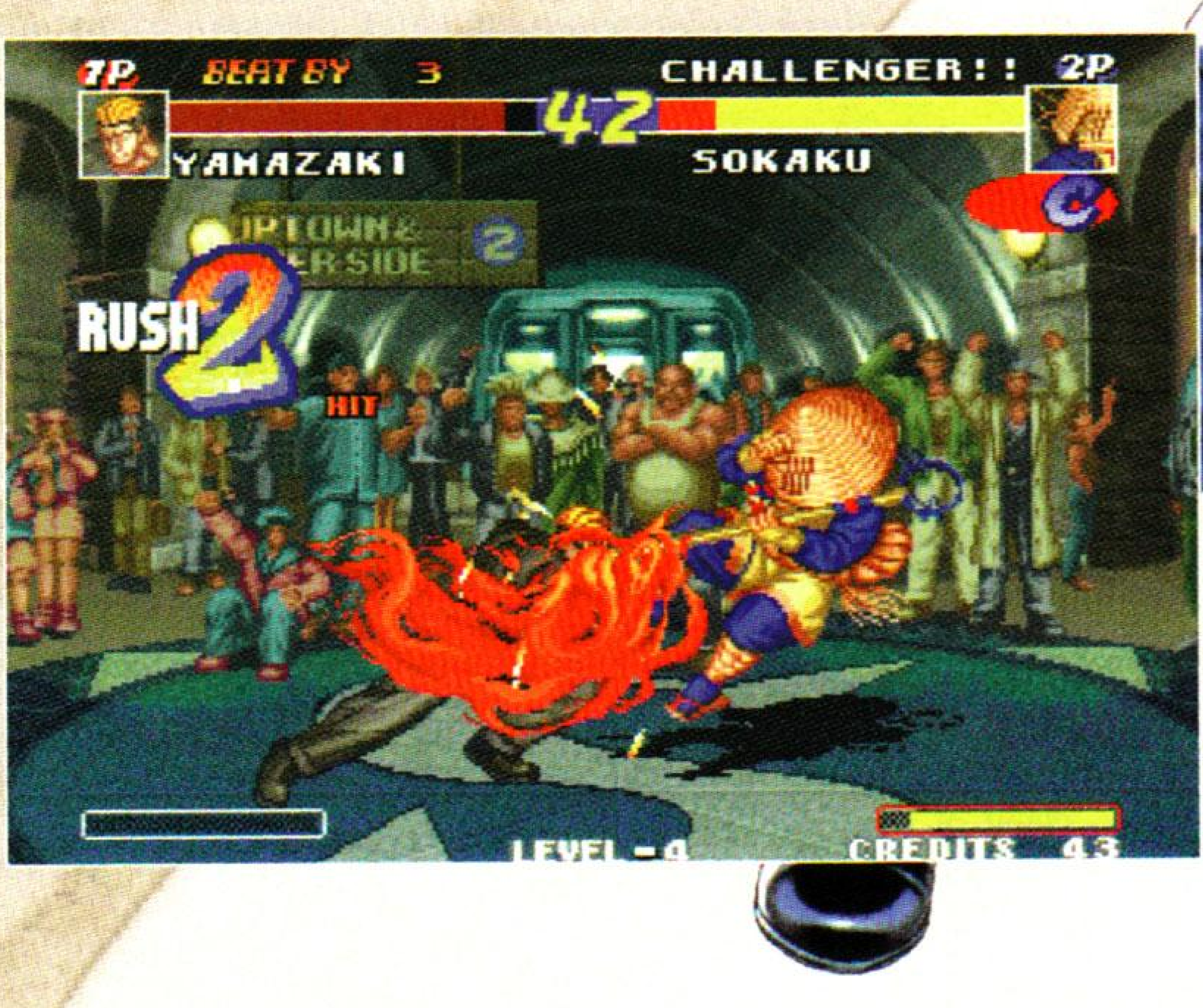


RYUJI YAMAZAKI

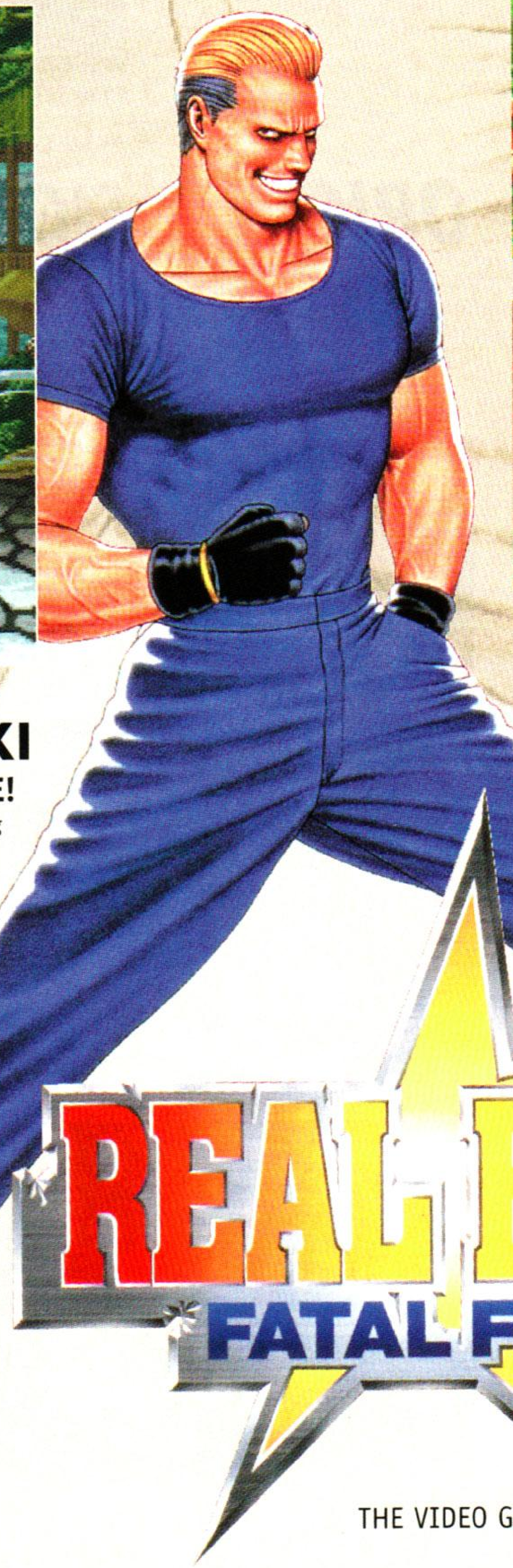
SILENT TERROR STALKS WITH A VENGEANCE!

A hired thug that watches over the proceedings, Ryuji Yamazaki is uncaring and vicious, and oversees the competition, picking out worthy players who must then face him in order to continue. With a rather antisocial habit of playing pocket billiards, this yob also carries an illegal flick-knife and fights dirty. When in a one-on-one situation with another player, Ryuji has a phenomenal reach, a dashing attack and a two-footed leap that are all reminiscent of a certain Final Fight mayor.





A couple of Ryuji Yamazaki techniques that demonstrate this thug's reach and power. "How about a taste of my Snake Tamer, Sokaku (above)? Or perhaps you fancy the firey flames of my Drill (right)?"



KING OF FIGHTERS

GUEST APPEARANCE

By 1994, most people thought that the Fury characters had been milked dry, but this didn't stop SNK marketing a new game that used characters from across their range of 2D fighting titles in a showdown of multiple player carnage! The characters may have been familiar, but were drawn differently and the gameplay was so improved over the earlier efforts that the arcade fans (and now home Neo Geo users) became extremely impressed with this offering.

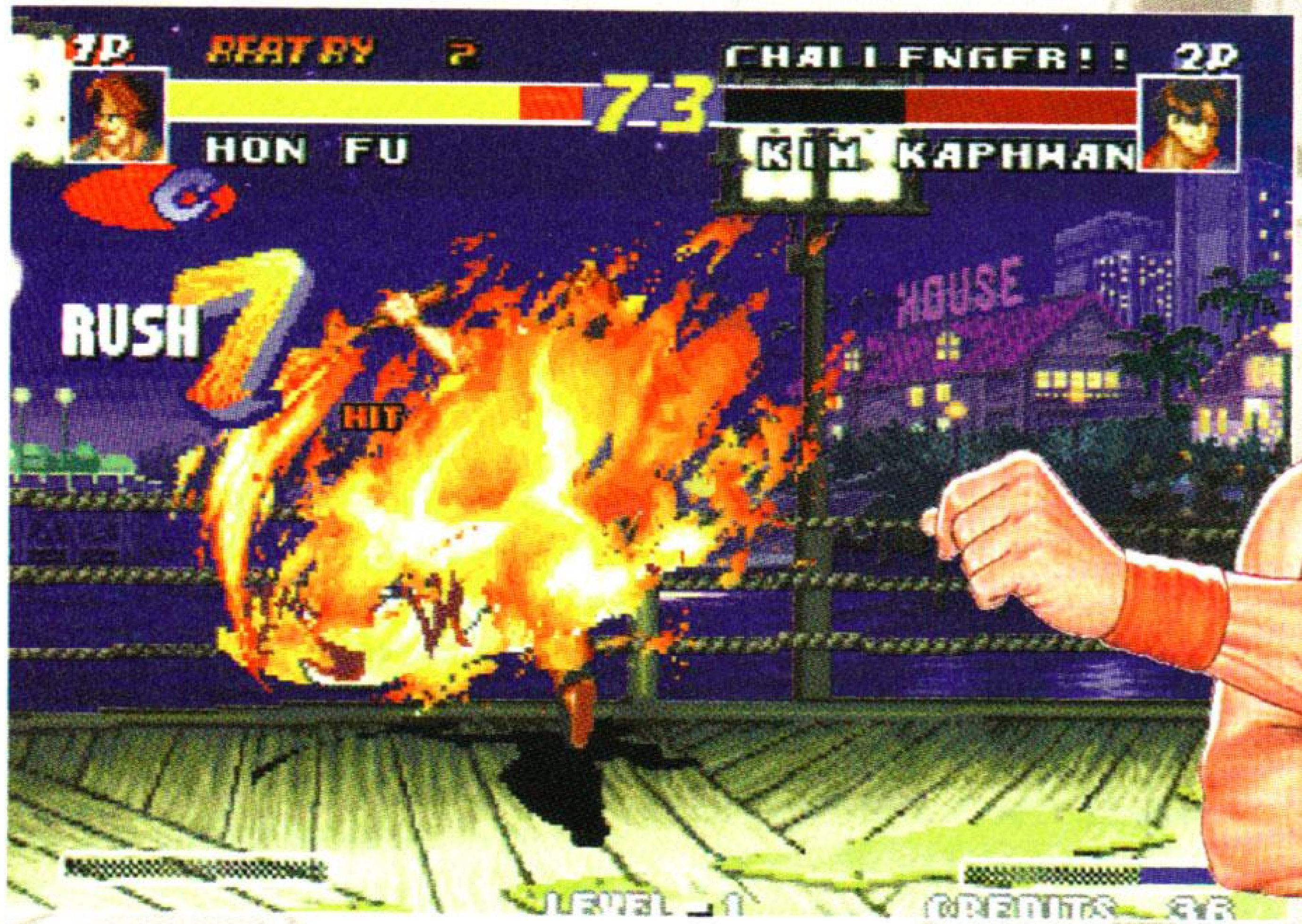
As anyone who even has a passing interest in beat-em-ups knows, the King of Fighters games (of '94 and '95) are arguably the finest of any of the 2D combat games around, and the reason for this was simple - tactics now played a much more relevant and important role; with a choice of eight teams of three characters, the combinations of opponents was immense. It was when the actual fighting started however, that players began to realise that this was the first beat-em-up to offer more than the Street Fighter series - King of Fighters was the new beat-em-up king! Apart from the sheer number of selectable teams, the combo system and the power gauge also helped to secure an eager fan base of hardcore gamers who finally had another sufficiently improved beat-em-up to play through. King of Fighters and the Samurai Shodown series helped spearhead the SNK renaissance; the Neo Geo was here to stay!

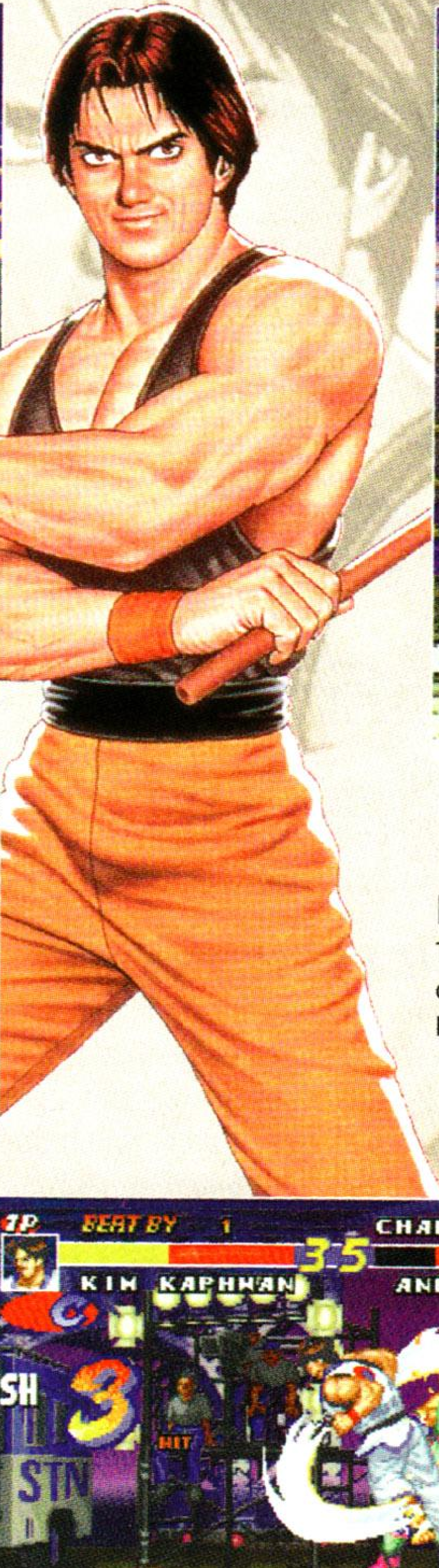
★★★★★

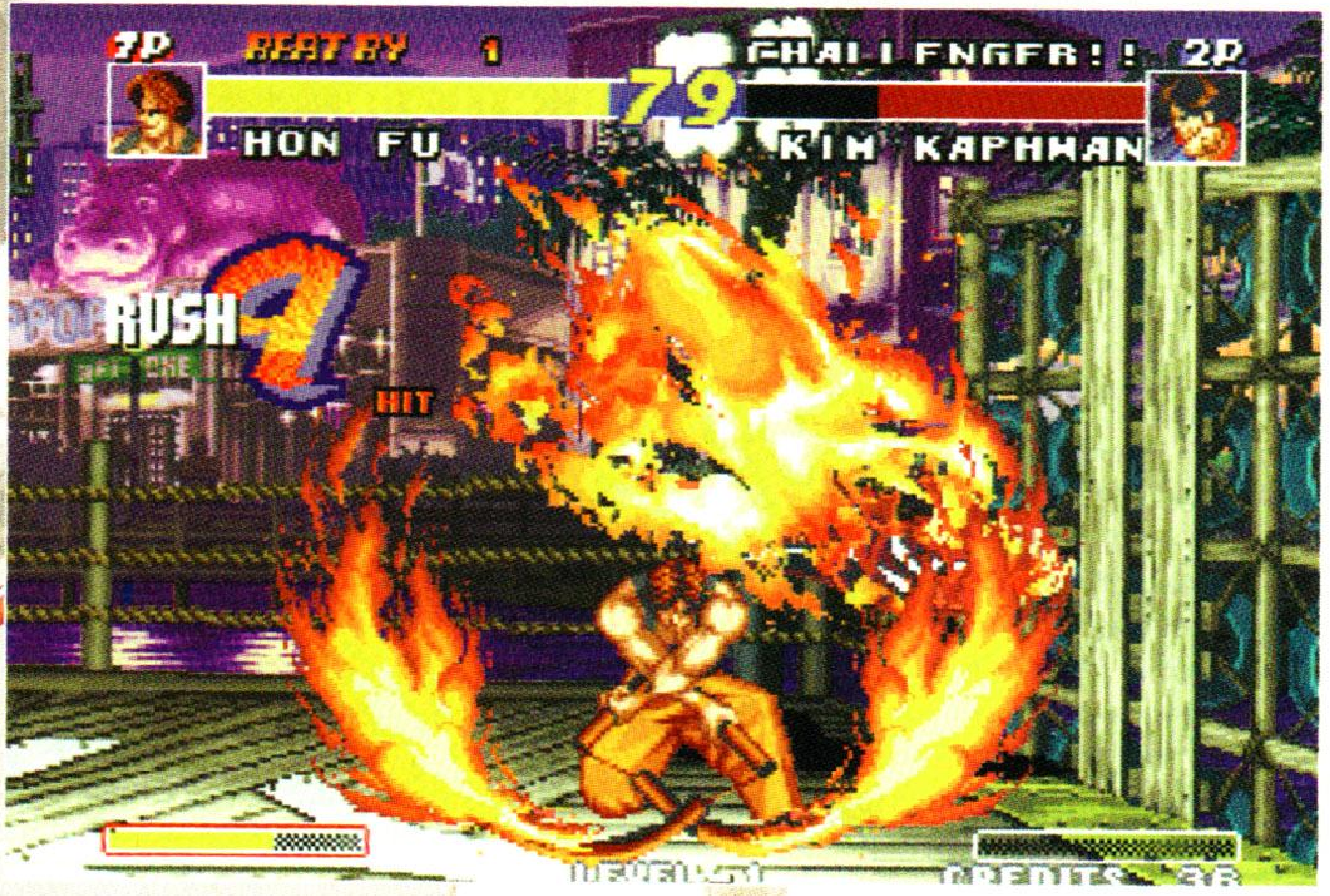
MAXIMUM
MAXIMUM

JOE HIGASHI
46
FIGHTERS 94

> ***"I've trained hard for this fight! Watch my new style and be amazed! These techniques aren't easy, but my magical Nunchukas shall burn my foes! Ha!"***


1P
BEAT BY 2
73
CHALLENGER!! 2P
HON FU
KIM KAPHWAN
RUSH 7
HIT
LEVEL-1
CREDITS 36




1P
BEAT BY 1
79
CHALLENGER!! 2P
HON FU
KIM KAPHWAN
RUSH 4
HIT
LEVEL-1
CREDITS 36

Hon Fu tries his hand at a bit of flaming nunchuka action, flooring the stunned Kim with a fiery special attack. Hon Fu is a quick and deadly fighter with a decent combo potential, and can mince opponents with rapid fire stick attacks.

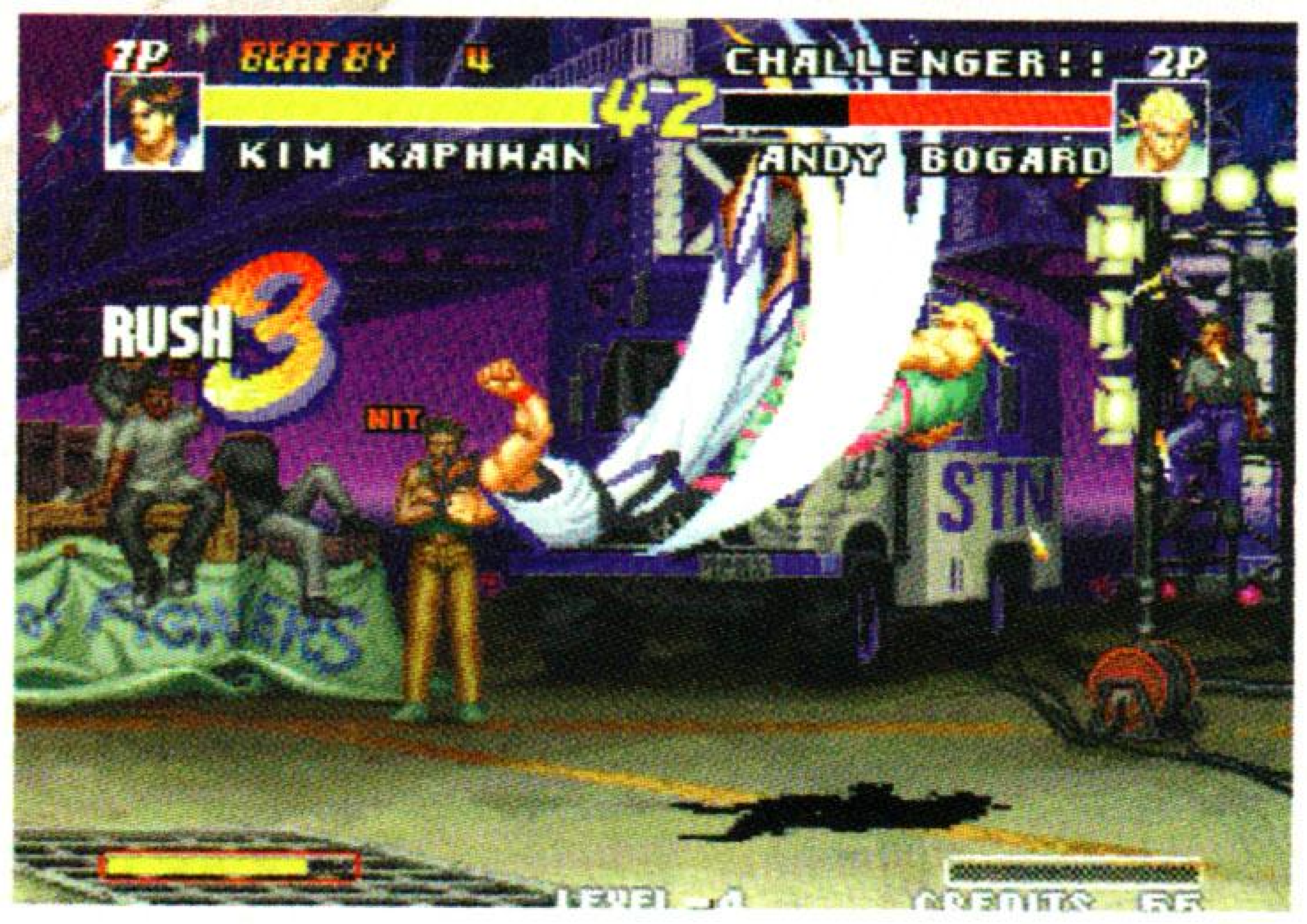
1P CHALLENGER!!
83
BEAT BY 1 2P
HON FU
JIN CHONREI
RUSH 2

HON FU

NUNCHUKA NIGHTMARE NEEDS NEW FOES TO FIGHT!

The tough-talking Chinese Detective suffered from severe bouts of jet-lag during the previous competition, and failed in his police mission; to uncover the criminals behind the slaughter of his Hong Kong stevedores. After a dressing-down by Chief Wulong, Hon-Fu took a leave of absence and returned to the tournament. He now acts as a warm-up opponent. When engaged in combat however, he uses his fiery nunchukas with vigour, and may also bounce off the sides of the screen onto a foe.

1P
BEAT BY 1
35
CHALLENGER!! 2P
KIM KAPHWAN
ANDY BOGARD
RUSH 3
HIT
LEVEL-4
CREDITS 58


1P
BEAT BY 4
42
CHALLENGER!! 2P
KIM KAPHWAN
ANDY BOGARD
RUSH 3
HIT
LEVEL-4
CREDITS 66

FATAL FURY 3

FOURTH IN THE FATAL SERIES

Last year saw the arrival of Fatal Fury 3, The Road to Final Victory, which was met with incredulous stares throughout arcade-land. How could SNK justify another Bogard family outing so soon after the previous games? Well, Neo Geo owners with reservations had little to complain about with the arrival of Fatal Fury 3, as the SNK developers finally managed to program a fighting title with just the right blend of action and special moves.

It was the adaptation of combos and super special moves that managed to lift this one above the crowd. Now your characters could prance around each other before unleashing a hyper blast of magical energy which caused severe amounts of hurting. The choice of selectable characters was limited to ten, but at least Mr Howard made a welcome appearance (and his Rising Sword special gained extra height), and the lone wolves received their fair share of spectacular power-ups.

The only real major problems with this one was the lack of players and the excruciatingly difficult special manoeuvres. You could burst several veins in your forehead before successfully executing a super power move, and this problem halted Fatal Fury 3 from becoming the new arcade leader in 2D action games.

★★★★

1P CHALLENGER!! 2P
37
JOE HIGASHI
MAI SHIRANUI

2P CHALLENGER!! 2P
ANDY BOGARD
FRANCO BASH
WON

ORIGINAL FIGHTERS SURPRISE WITH STYLE!

KIM KAPHWAN **-** Returning from a spell away, Kim is quickly offered an obscene amount of money to return to the side of Geese Howard. He accepts, as he has travelled through parts of Korea and feels that the money will benefit an orphanage he is trying to establish; indeed, he is even accompanied by three street urchins that he has befriended. In the ring however, he is a changed individual, with a number of excellent kicks, with his overhead and rising techniques being the most damaging.

MAI SHIRANUI **-** A sorrowful Mai was found weeping in the halls of the Fuchika Dojo by Joe Higashi. Joe discovered that there was nothing Mai could do to halt Andy from returning to Southtown, and offered to take her with him. Mai accepted without question, and has entered the competition in order to halt Andy from making a terrible mistake. Her fighting style employs projectile fans as well as magic, and Mai has become both powerful and nimble with straightforward special attacks.

1P CHALLENGER!!
89
BEAT BY 2 2P
MAI SHIRANUI
ANDY BOGARD

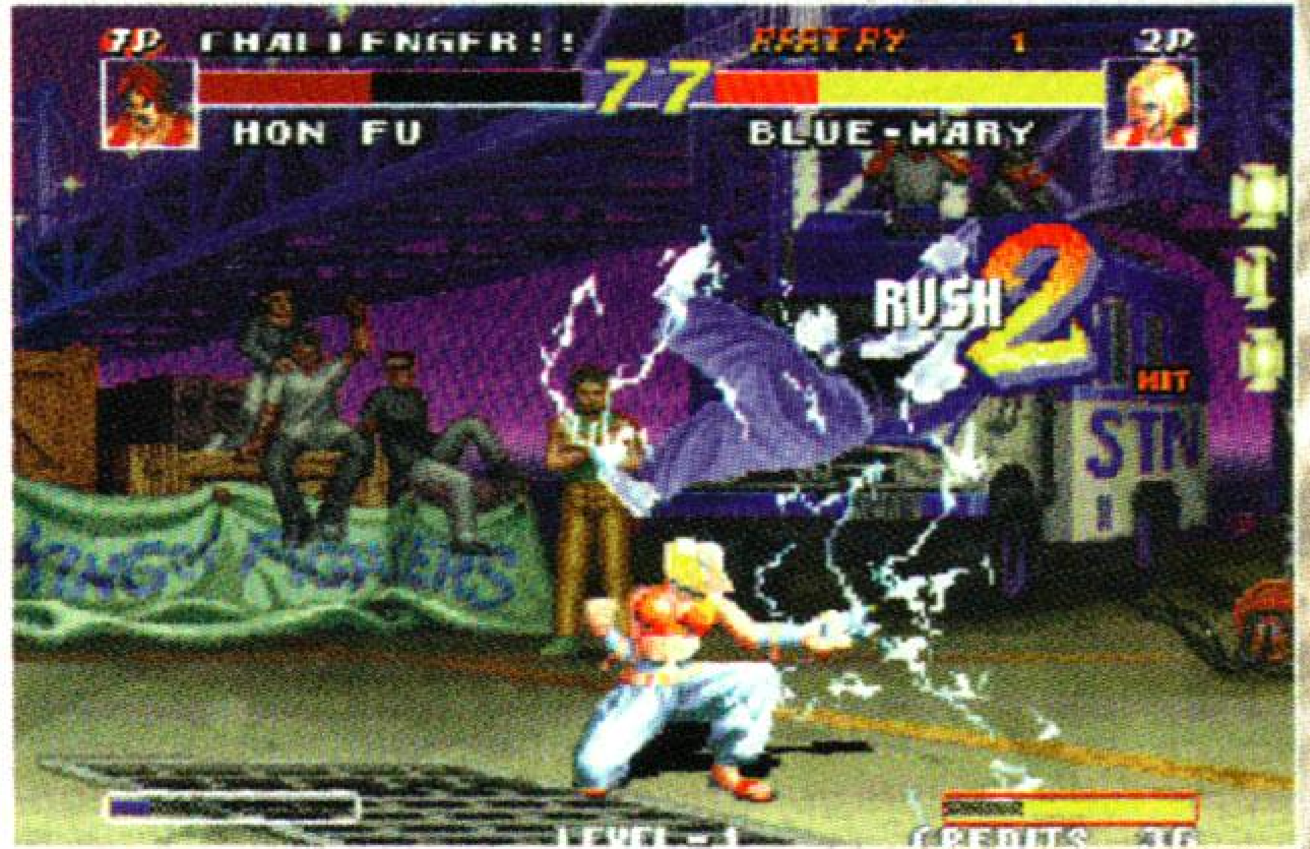
1P CHALLENGER!!
47
BEAT BY 2 2P
MAI SHIRANUI
ANDY BOGARD

DUCK KING **-** The six month period between the King of Fighters tournaments and the mysterious disappearance of Geese Howard had been a blessing in disguise for Duck King, as his gang increased their territory whilst Duck himself spent more time on his DJing career. Currently and understandably nervous after Geese's reappearance, Duck has wisely decided to help the possessed Mr Howard. Fighting wise, Duck remains flamboyant and fast, with his trademark roll and a firm **MAXIMUM** favourite; the trouser inflation!

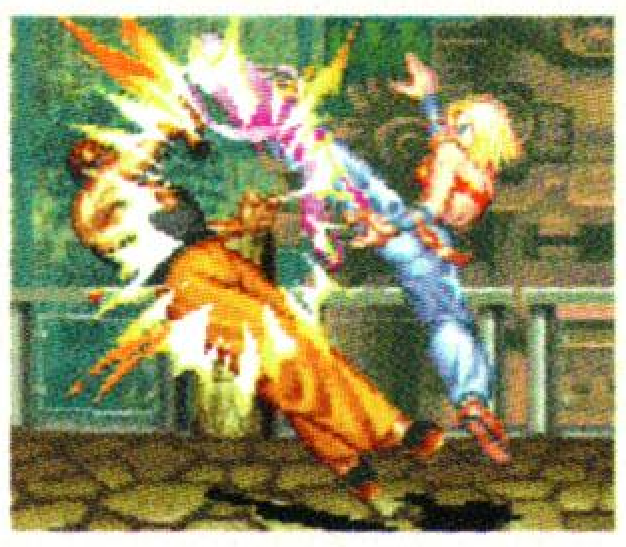
Good old Duck King has survived from the first ever Fury, despite being one of the most unpopular contestants of all time. Duck is also accompanied by a small fluffy chick that watches Duck's style at all times, and reacts with a suitably stressed look when things go slightly awry.

1P CHALLENGER!!
19
BEAT BY 2P
DUCK KING
BOB WILSON
RUSH 2
HIT
S.POWER GO
LEVEL-6

A new ploy from SNK seems to be equipping many of Real Bout's fighters with inbuilt flamethrowers, as some of the attacks show.

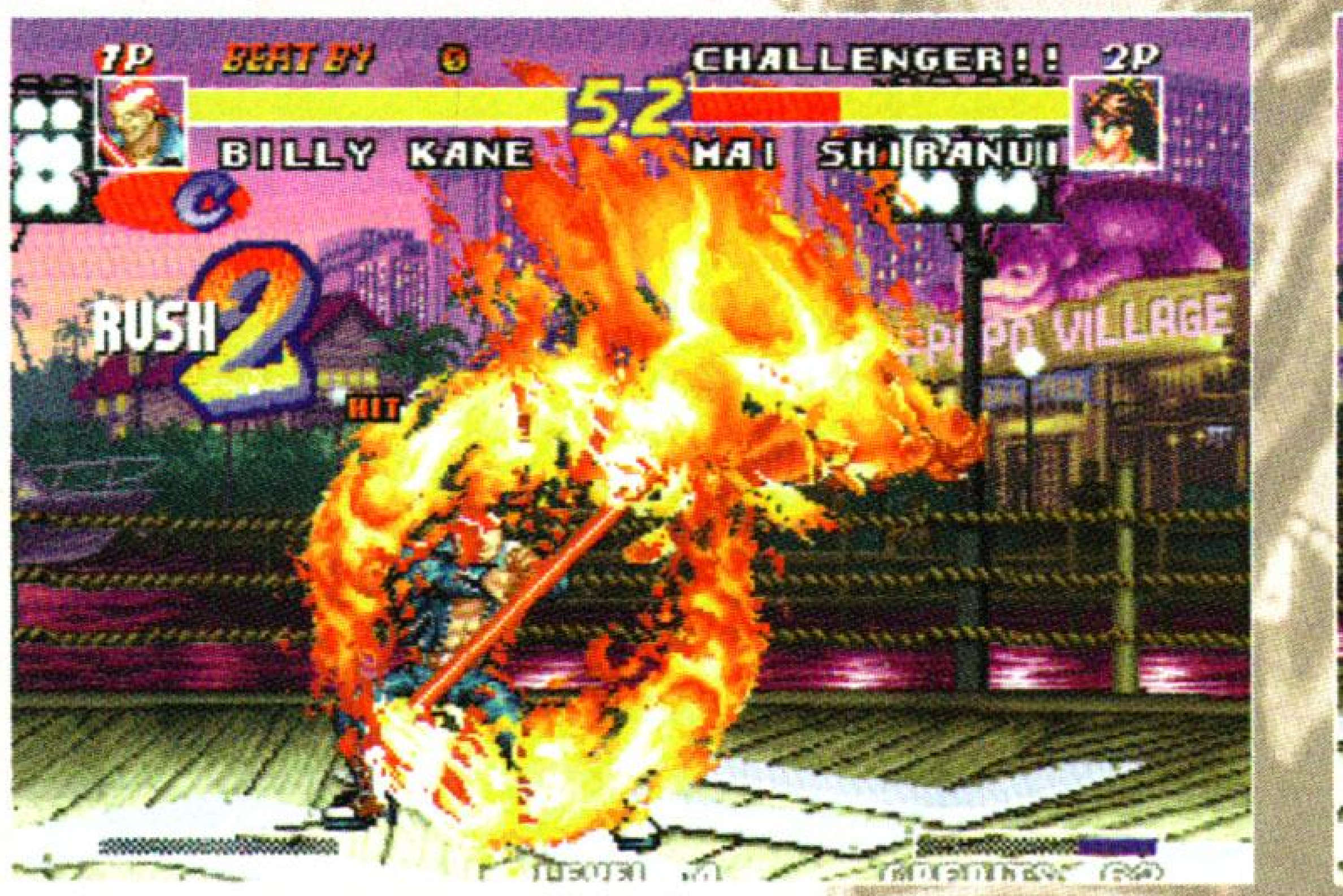


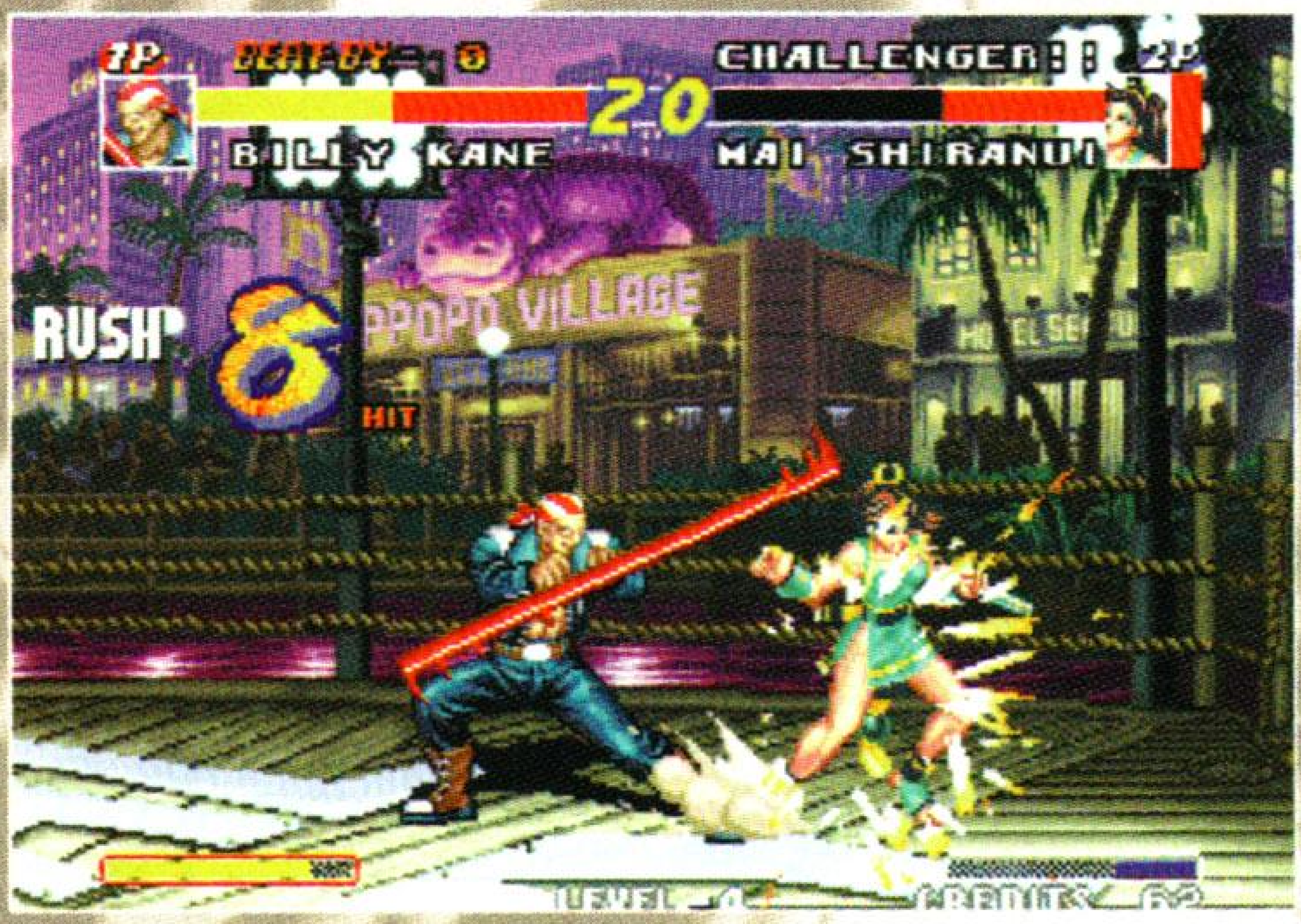
BLUE MARY - Mary has spent considerable time in training after losing both her boyfriend and father to the evil might of Geese Howard. She weaned herself off alcoholic cocktails and vowed to revenge the death of her loved ones. When Geese was resurrected, she shrieked in disbelief, but with the help of the lone wolves, she has continued to train, and now appears ready to face the Southtown evil. When fighting, Mary is the mistress of throws and counters, and with rapid reflexes she may throw off many basic attacks with ease. Her super special attack is also a sight to behold.



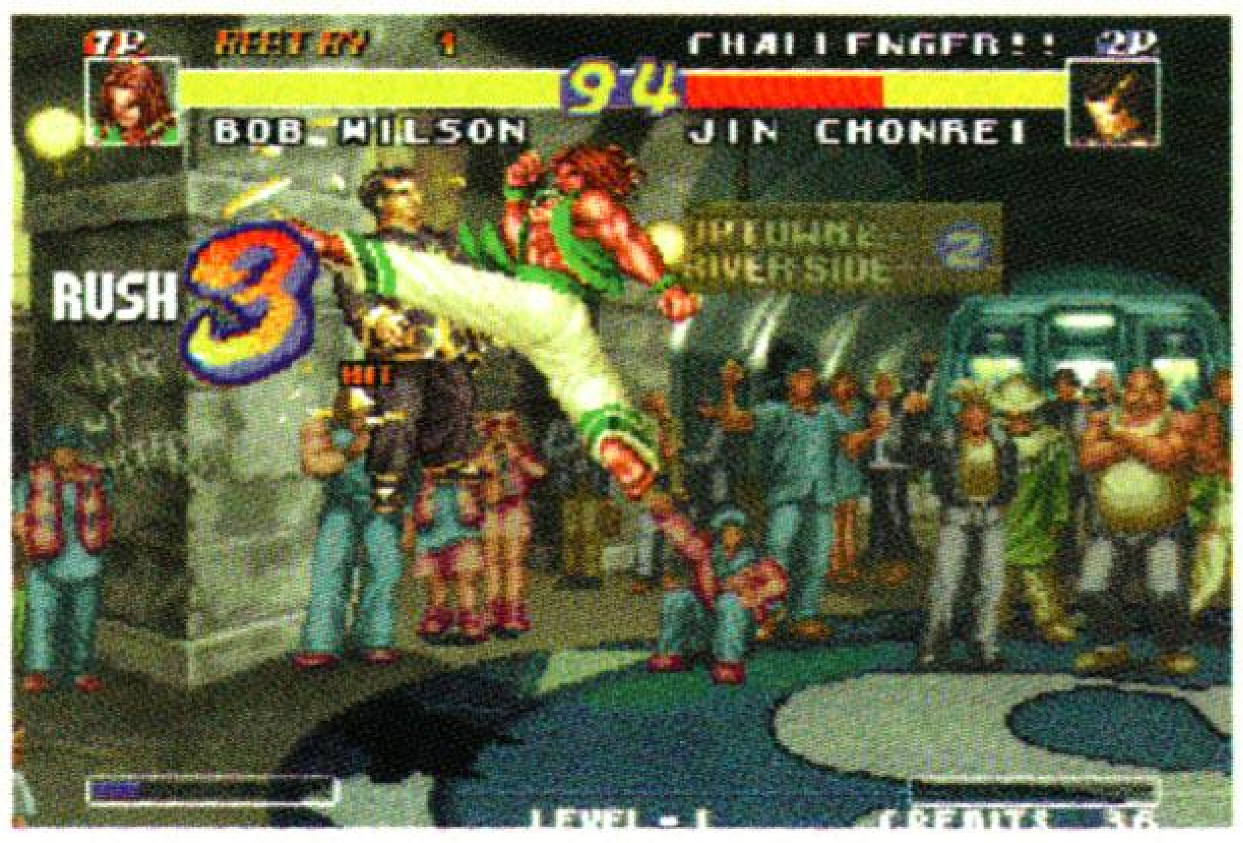
Queen of the reversal attack. Miss Mary bounces her way around the arena with grace and finesse. Once enraged, however, a massive electricity surge empowers her, and she becomes almost unstoppable (above).

BILLY KANE - The English pole-wielding expert has spent the intervening time continuing with Geese's day-to-day business affairs, whilst secretly praying and chanting for his master's recovery. With the revival of Geese, Billy Kane's job has been to organise the preliminary bouts whilst Mr Howard readies himself for the final confrontation. In combat, Kane uses his long pole-arm either to inflict damage or to launch an attack from, and this enables his hits to be struck from some distance away. Range and a whirling pole are Billy's main advantages.

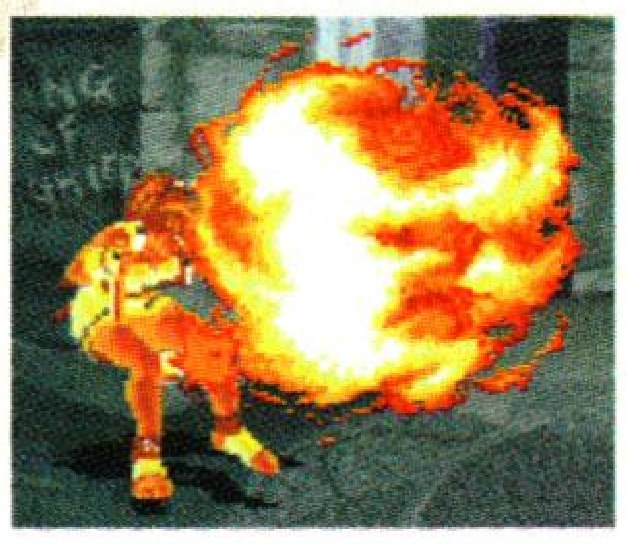


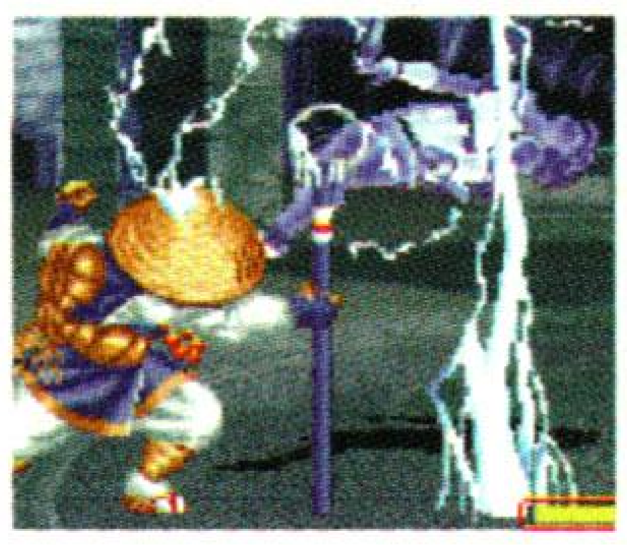


BOB WILSON - The King of Capoella has entered the ultimate King of Fighters tournament despite a number of warnings from his friend, Richard. Obviously bored with managing the Pao Pao cafe, Mr Wilson has decided to brush up on his combat skills before cheerfully attempting to assassinate anyone who stands in his way. Once psyched up and pitched against a foe, Wilson proves to be a dexterous combat monster, but with a reliance on kicks, and this hinders him somewhat.

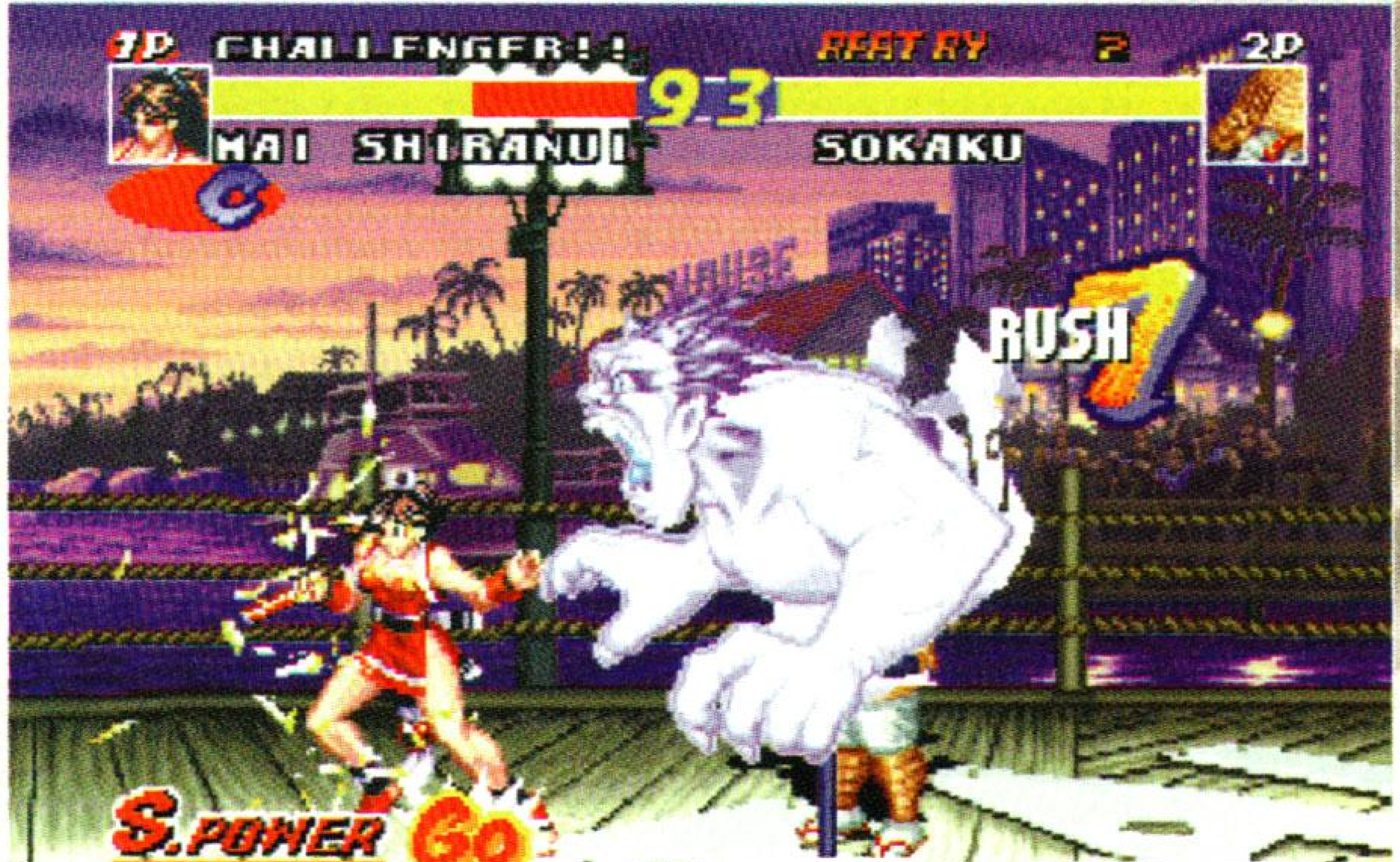


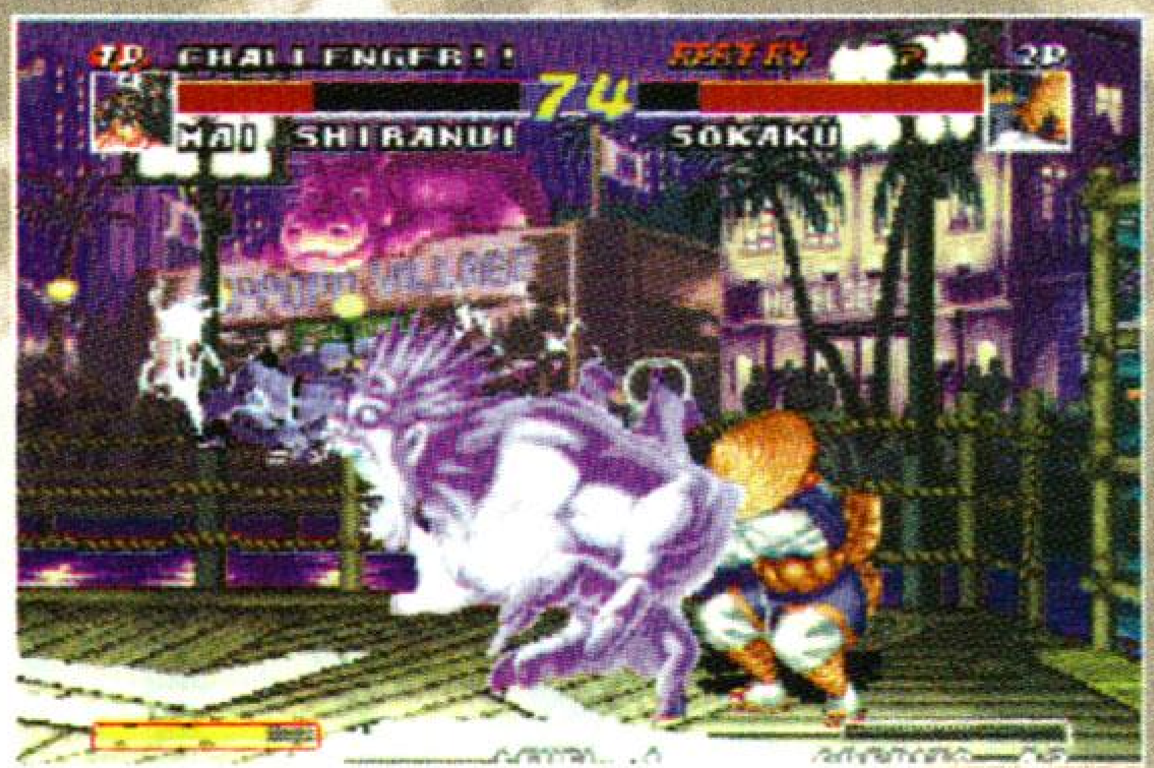
SOKAKU MOCHIZUKI - Sokaku considers his past exploits and attempts to gain the Qin scrolls to be less than successful. The Mochizuki clan has pledged to obtain the papyrus papers at all costs, and the tribal leaders have stated that this is Sokaku's last outing. For this reason, Sokaku has been training furiously as he cannot fail and bring dishonour to the Mochizuki clan once again. In melee fighting, Sokaku summons spirits to aid him in his cause, including small manikins that swarm over an enemy and larger beasts of the ether. His deflection and doppleganger moves are also of merit.



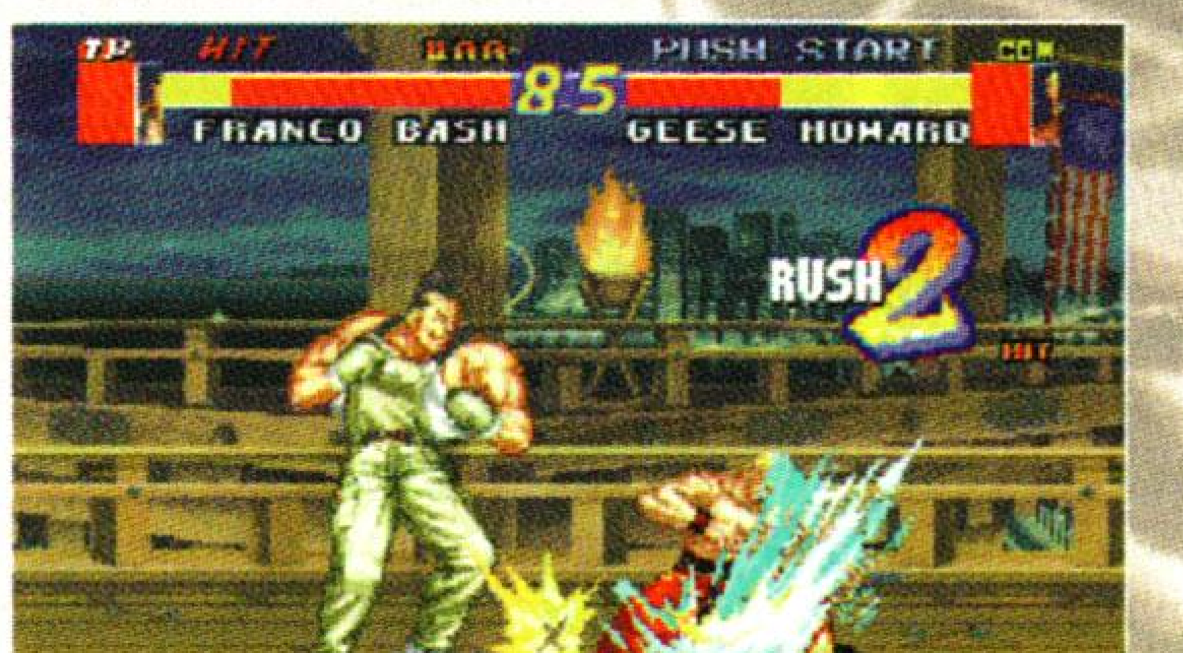


Sokaku specials are the order of the day here (above). A spinning fireball catches an unsuspecting Mai off guard, whilst an easy to execute electricity storm finishes her off. Sokaku also summons some rather unpleasant ghosts to aid him in his task (left).





FRANCO BASH - The French man-mountain had retired from heavyweight Kick Boxing until a mysterious fighting organisation kidnapped his son. With a fearful wife urging him to return to the arena in an attempt to locate Franco junior, the training began again. Satisfied that his prowess has returned, Franco shouts from the rooftops to let the world know of his comeback. When attacking, Franco is lumbering and sometimes devastating, but players should be aware that he lacks speed and agility.



Large and slow, and with a rather comedic voice, Monsieur Bash has a reputation for delivering the largest portions of the entire game, as Geese Howard finds out (left).

REAL BOUT FATAL FURY

FIFTH IN THE FATAL SERIES

The final instalment of the Hungry Wolf saga (for the moment) saw SNK refine the Fatal Fury fighting style still further. Over the past five years, SNK spent considerable time on the Fatal Fury legend, exploiting the three main characters to unimaginable levels and generally tweaking the game with each new arrival. The success of the King of Fighters games lead to the first really playable version of Fatal Fury (number 3), before the final problems were ironed out and the finest version ever finally arrived.

This has more to offer than a simple extended version of Fatal Fury 3, as the oversway system admirably demonstrates. With sixteen fighters and a much simpler system for executing special moves, Neo Geo owners should feel pleased that SNK have created another first-rate title. Yes, it has taken five years to get just right (and those with more than one version of the game should try before they buy), but once you've sat down to a long session of concentrated sparring, you can really see what has been achieved. Playing this alongside the first Fatal Fury is most entertaining, as the first SNK attempt is spectacularly basic by today's standards, whilst Real Bout Fatal Fury is fast with easy and excellent special moves, good combo potential and a wide choice of characters. So how did it score? Turn to our Reviews section to find out...

CHALLENGER!!
JIN CHONREI
BLUE-MARY

CHALLENGER!!
KIM KAPHWAN
ANDY BOGARD
RUSH 3

The secrets of VIRTUA COP are now available! Patrol the streets with a vast range of killing ordinance!

An urgent missive crackles through on your police radio from Chief Hambleton requesting your appearance on the VIrtua Police firing range. You leave the suspect you were questioning, wipe the blood from your face and hands and jog swiftly to the reception area. After a quick cup of steaming Virtua coffee, you chat briefly with the new recruit Janet Marshall before heading off to meet the Chief. Rumours are circulating the office that Chief Bob 'gunner' Hambleton has received the go-ahead to test a series of rapid assault cannons on the streets of the Virtua City, and you are eager to volunteer for the first patrol.

Spitting out a rather unpleasant lump of Virtua tobacco, Chief Hambleton lights up the largest cigar you've seen (the biggest since 'Operation Cone Control') and beckons you over to a large container lorry. Opening the large metal doors, you watch a team of white-suited SWAT members unload a number of shiny black boxes. Unlocking the cases, Chief Hambleton rips open a vast parcel of shrink-wrapping before presenting you with a jet-black weapon that looks like a large machine rifle.

"The boys over at tech division have been working on this rechargeable machine rifle for the last six months. Isn't she a beauty? And we want you to test it for us!"

Your eyes light up and you feel an odd sensation in your Virtua pantaloons before speeding off to try out the largest combat weapon you've ever seen...

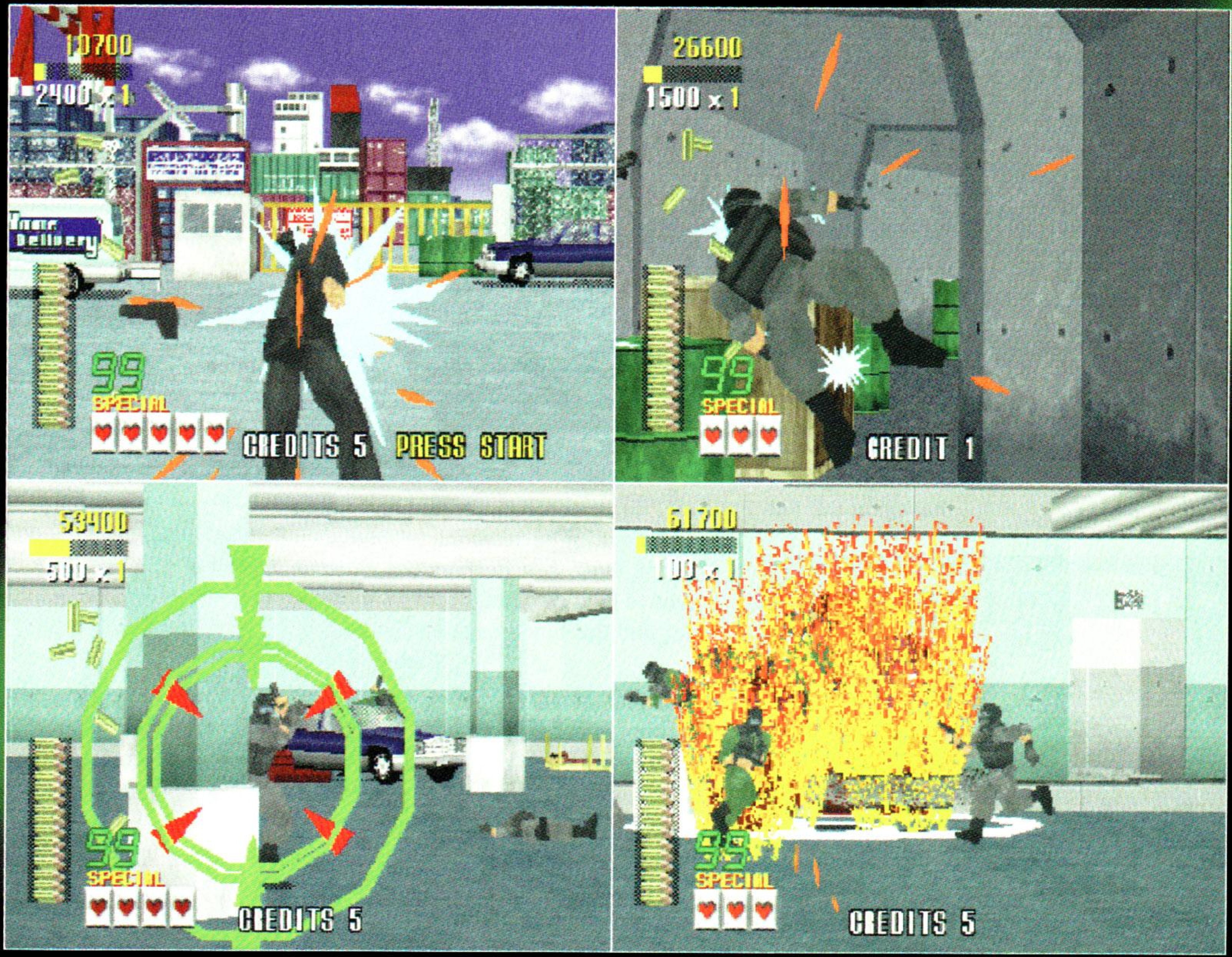
Chief's message: "I want the entire district cleansed of EVL troopers! As bloodied corpses are your speciality, I'm relying on you to shoot everyone repeatedly in a rapid-fire frenzy until they fall over and stop twitching!"

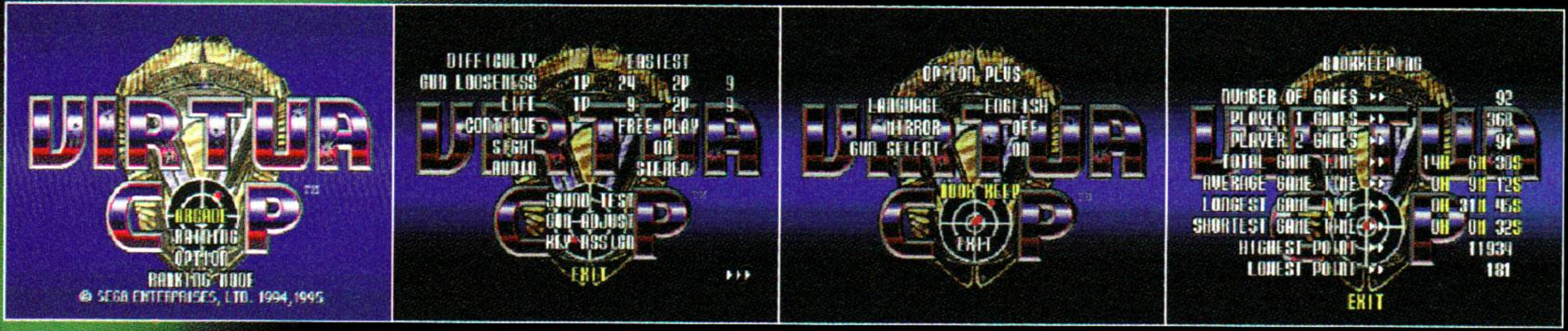
IMMEDIATE RANKING MASTERY AND CHECK YOUR BOOK-KEEPING!

Instead of battling through the entire game, you may achieve the fabled Ranking Mode by executing this cheat at the SEGA screen. When this appears, press Up, Down, Left and Right whilst holding the C button and go to the title screen. The Ranking mode should now have appeared so plug your gun and fire away! The Ranking mode is also the key to accessing the Options Plus screen, from which the Book Keeping mode may be selected.

BRING YOUR HEAVY-DUTY WEAPONS TO BEAR!!

You too can experience the joys of Chief Hambleton's latest peace-keepers by inputting the following at the SEGA screen. Hold down the C button and press Down, Up Right, Left, Up, Up, Left and Right. When inputted correctly, you'll hear the reloading sound, then plug in the gun and begin as normal. To choose from your secret weapons storage, pause the game and reload repeatedly, and this cycles through your weapons with the "SPECIAL" rapid machine rifle (that never needs to be reloaded) appearing last. Now you can take to the streets with no fear!





VIRTUA COP
ARCADE
RANKING
OPTION
RANKING MODE
© SEGA ENTERPRISES, LTD. 1994,1995

DIFFICULTY EASIEST
GUN LOOSENESS 1P 24 2P 9
LIFE 1P 9 2P 9
CONTINUE FREE PLAY
SIGHT ON
AUDIO STEREO
SOUND TEST
GUN ADJUST
KEY ASSIGN
EXIT

OPTION PLUS
LANGUAGE ENGLISH
MIRROR OFF
GUN SELECT ON
BOOK KEEP
EXIT

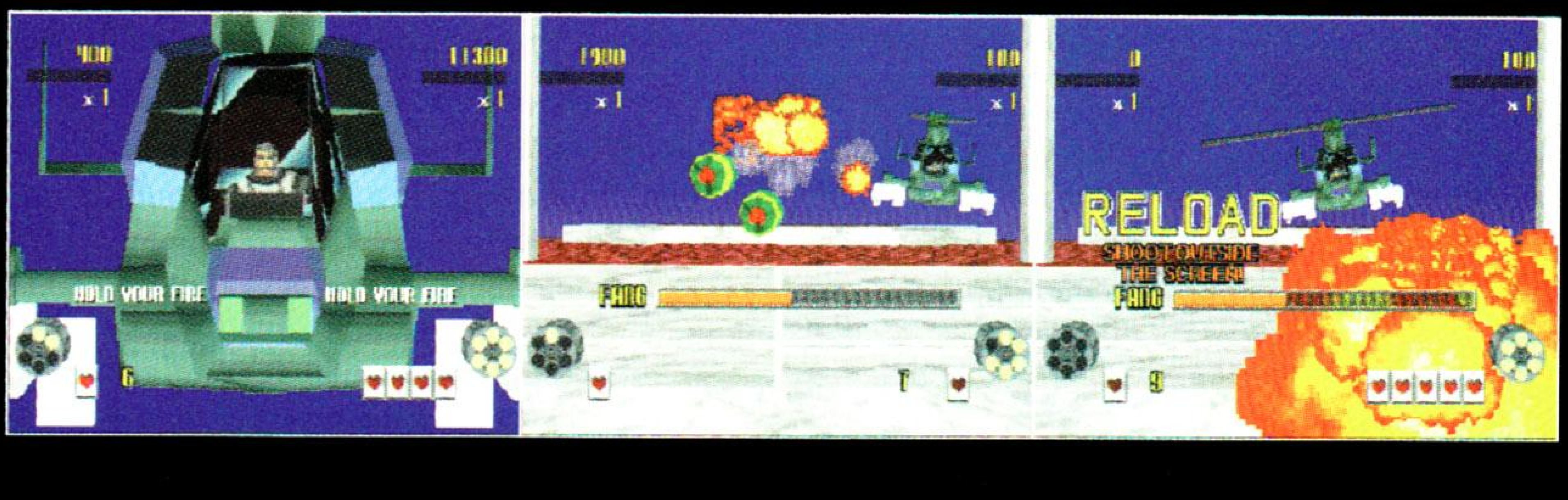
BOOKKEEPING
NUMBER OF GAMES ▸▸ 92
PLAYER 1 GAMES ▸▸ 368
PLAYER 2 GAMES ▸▸ 97
TOTAL GAME TIME ▸▸ 14H 6M 30S
AVERAGE GAME TIME ▸▸ 0H 9M 12S
LONGEST GAME TIME ▸▸ 0H 31M 45S
SHORTEST GAME TIME ▸▸ 0H 0M 32S
HIGHEST POINT ▸▸ 11934
LOWEST POINT ▸▸ 181
EXIT

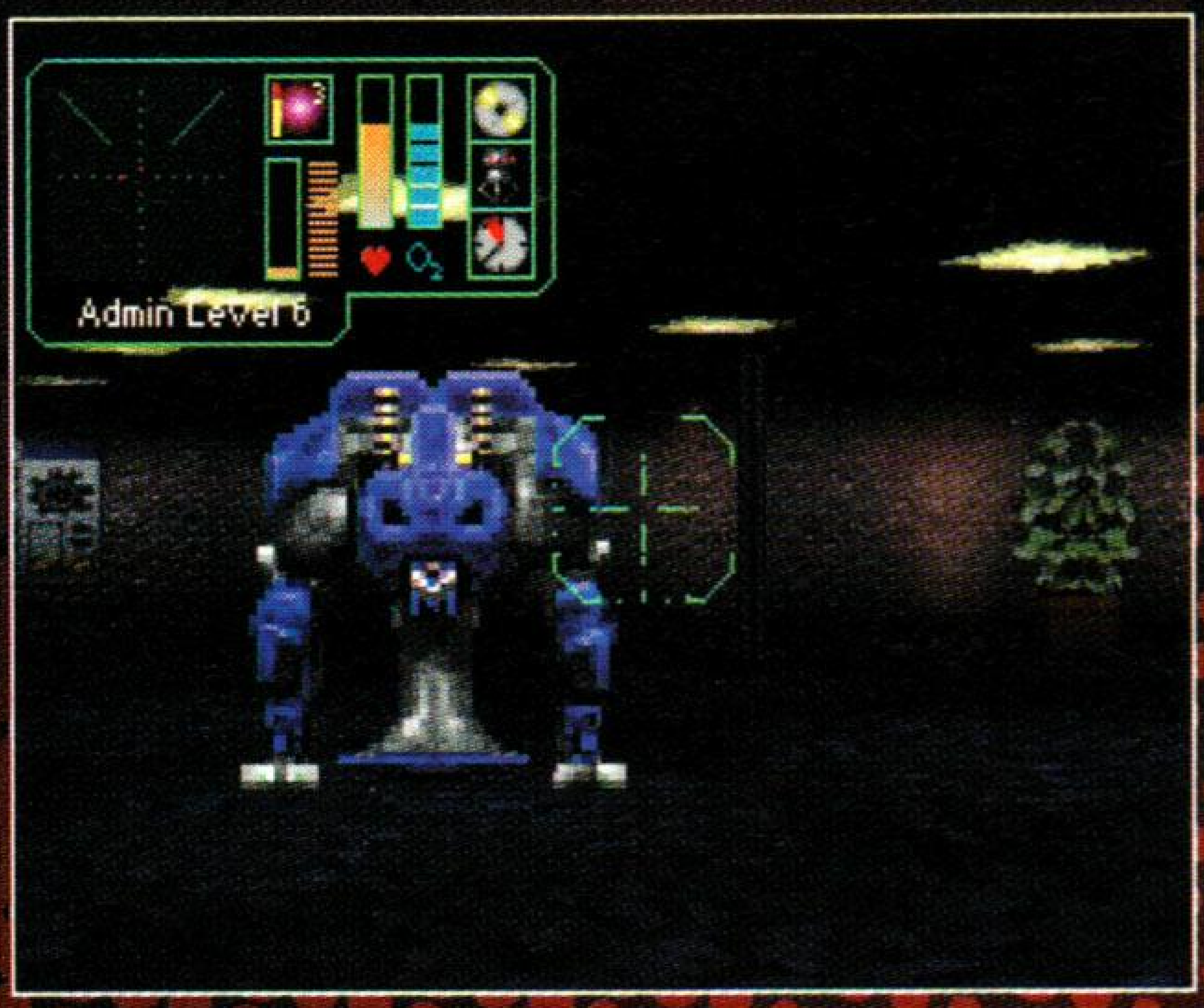
Here is what you should be looking for when checking to see whether your cheat has worked. Note that the Gun Select option on the Option Plus screen (middle left) is switched to 'on'. Also check out the phenomenal number of times that we've played this title (in the name of the mag, of course). Oh and by the way, we've yet to hear from anyone, either here or in Japan, who has beaten our Ranking score (revealed last issue). We challenge you! The gauntlet has been thrown down!

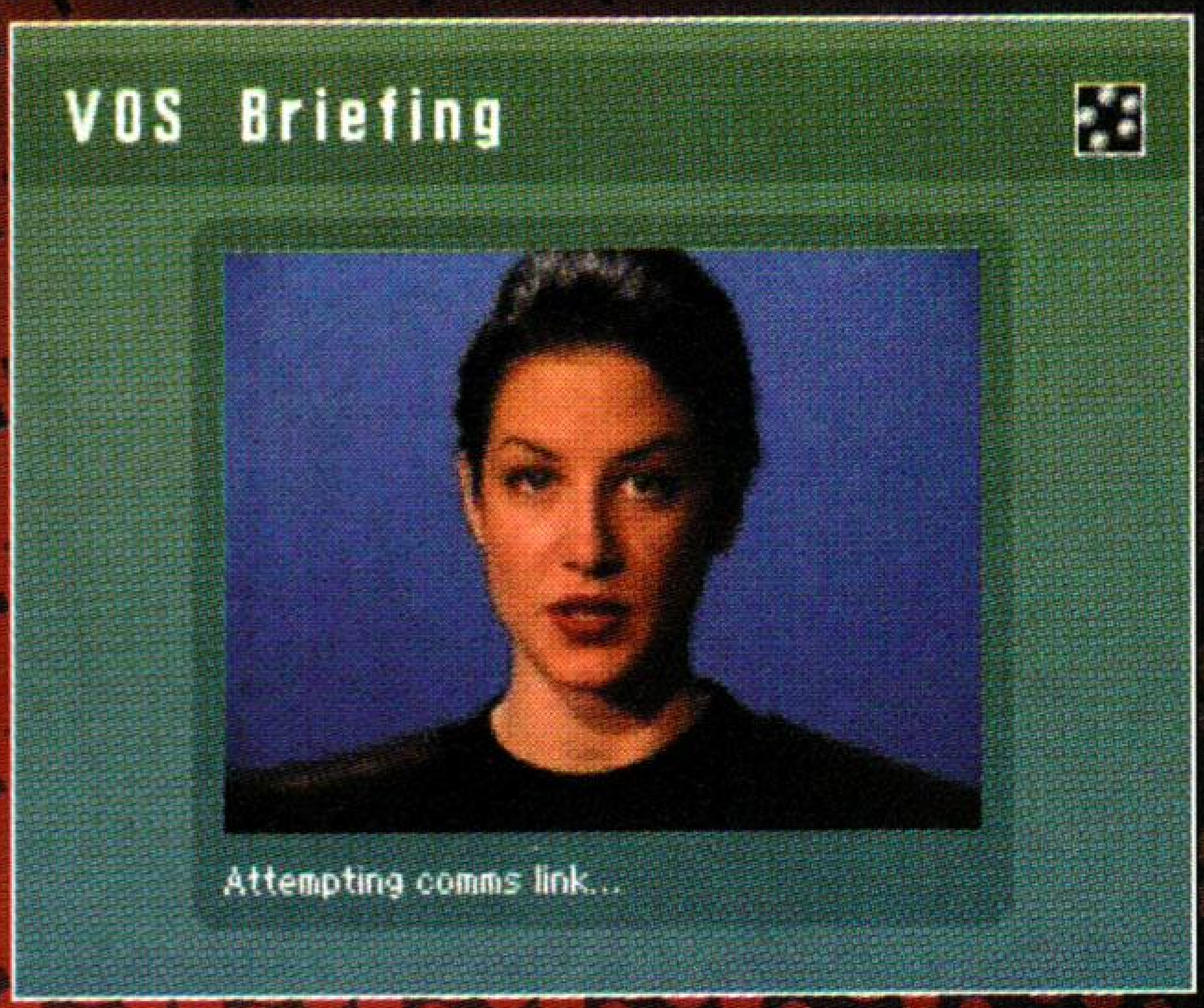
STAGE 3 SECRET BOSS JOE FANG

"I'M THROUGH WITH YOU TWO!! NOW YOU MEET YOUR MAKER!!"

Playing the game through consecutively allows you to enter into combat with the game's real final boss, known as Joe Fang. This is the pilot of the attack helicopter seen earlier, and the figure behind all of EVL's illegal gun-running. He hovers into view and lets rip with rockets and flame-fire; and his combat chopper is bullet-proof! Therefore, concentrate on the gun ports, and keep your fire trained at those two points. Once you've taken out the gun points (with is relatively easy), the helicopter explodes, falling out of the sky and turning into a fiery inferno. The mission is over, and surely Fang and the EVL organisation have been brought to an end for good...?







Space closes in.
Dark corridors surround you.
Your home is very far away.

And someone somewhere wants you dead.

This is gameplay beyond your wildest nightmares.
This is the most absorbing strategic thriller of them all.
This is Defcon 5, and now it's available for your PlayStation.

Chilling 3D graphics and a nerve-jangling soundtrack combine in this off-world hell-hole where survival depends on your wits, your logic and your burning desire to live! But when an entire alien attack fleet has you in its sights, you might just end up wondering where your next breath is coming from.

The MRP 6F mining colony is your workplace, your home, your world.
It could soon become your coffin.

Defcon 5.
Peace has a price and you're about to pay it.

PlayStation
PAL
DEFCON
5

PlayStation

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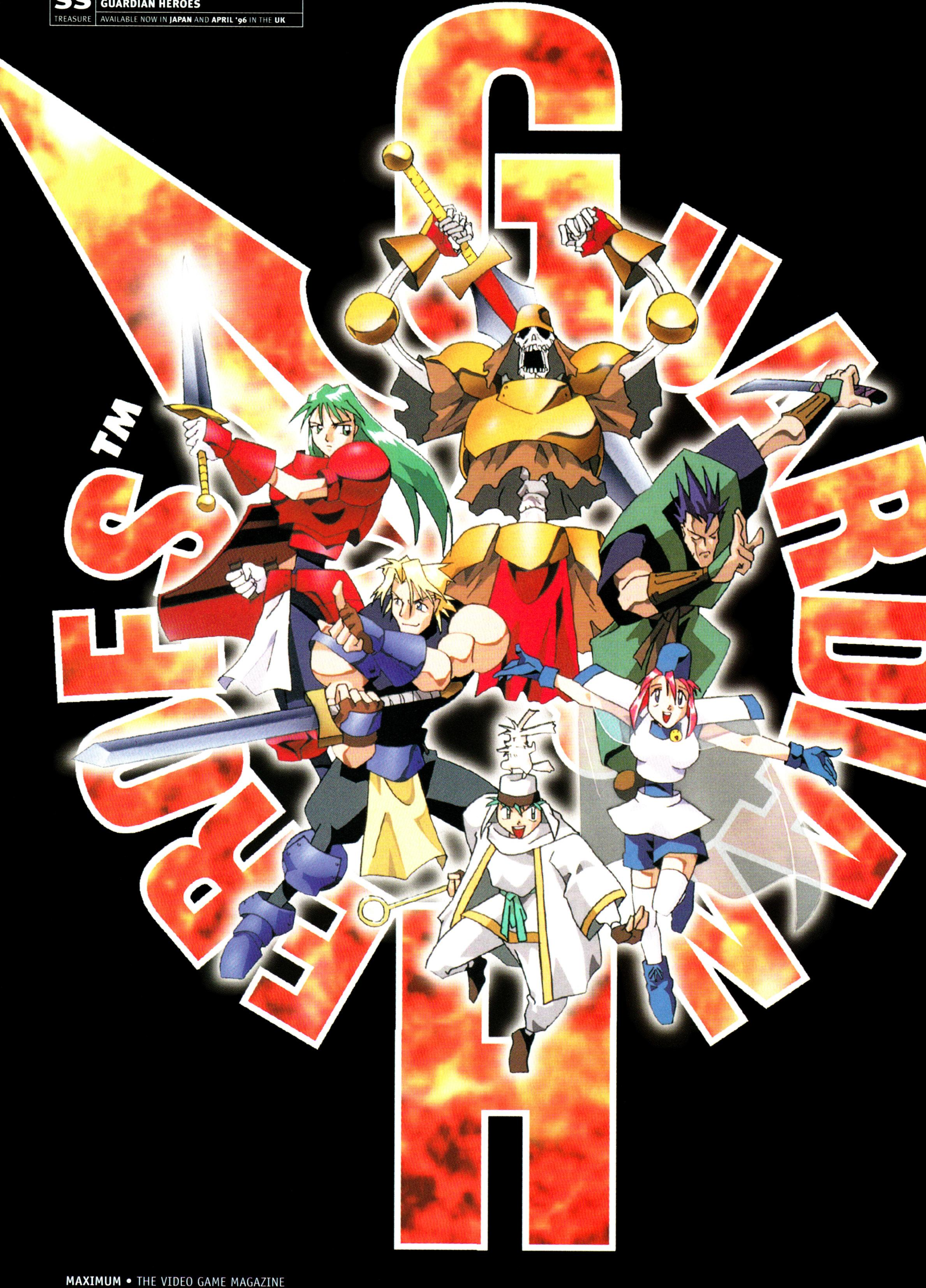
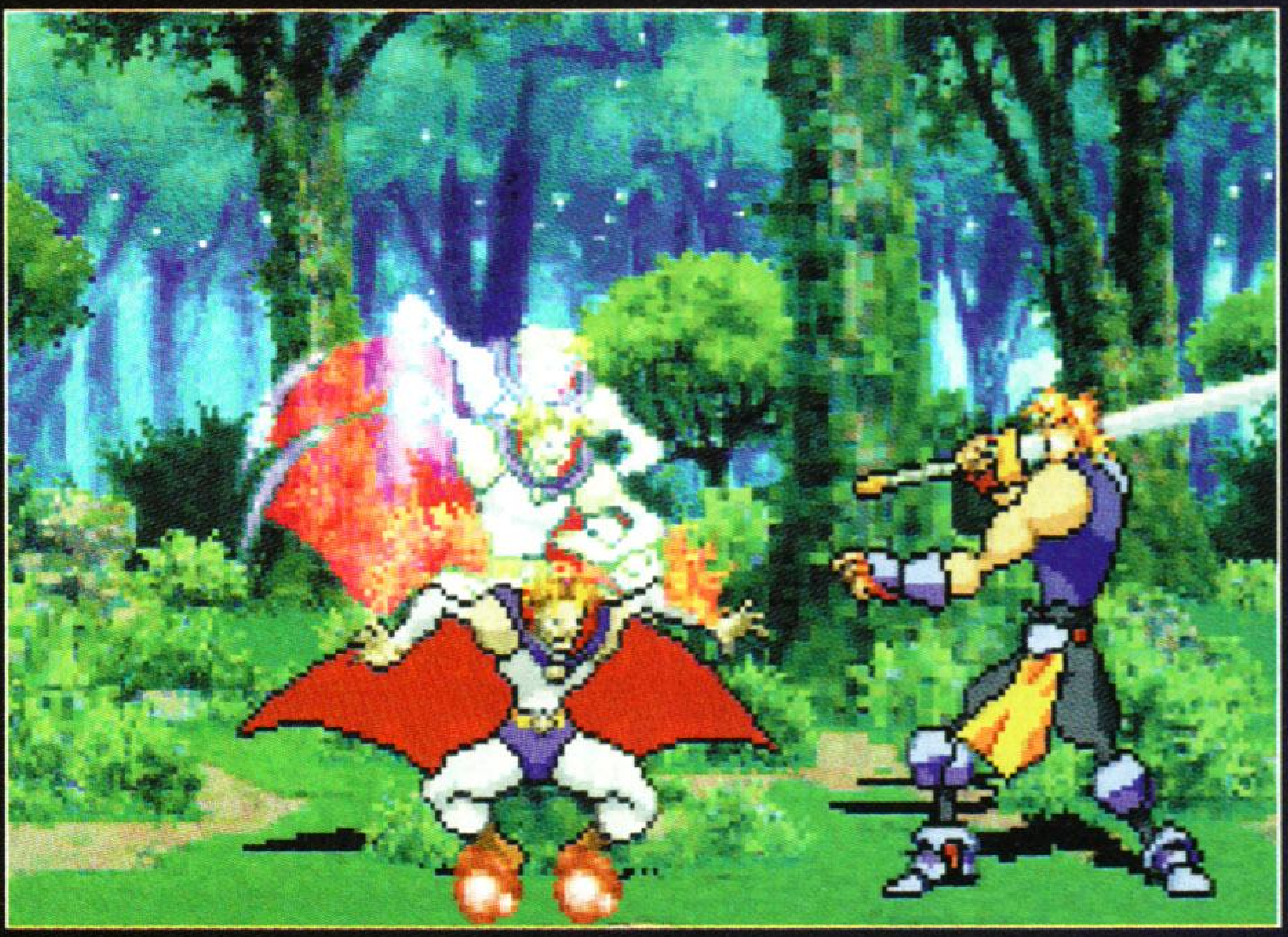
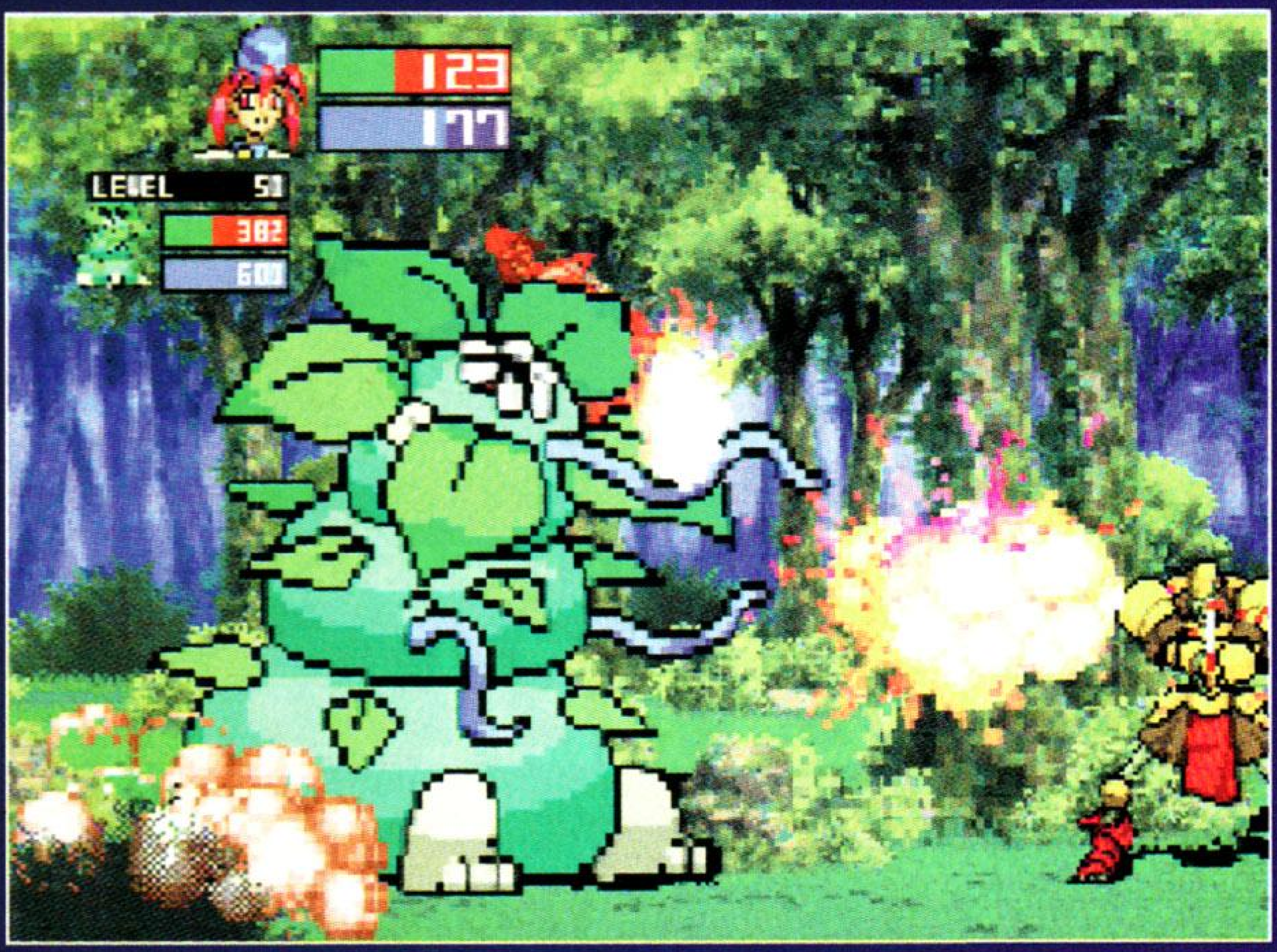

GUARDIAN HEROES™

GUARDIAN HEROES – Top coders TREASURE have a SATURN SMASH-HIT of truly epic proportions!!

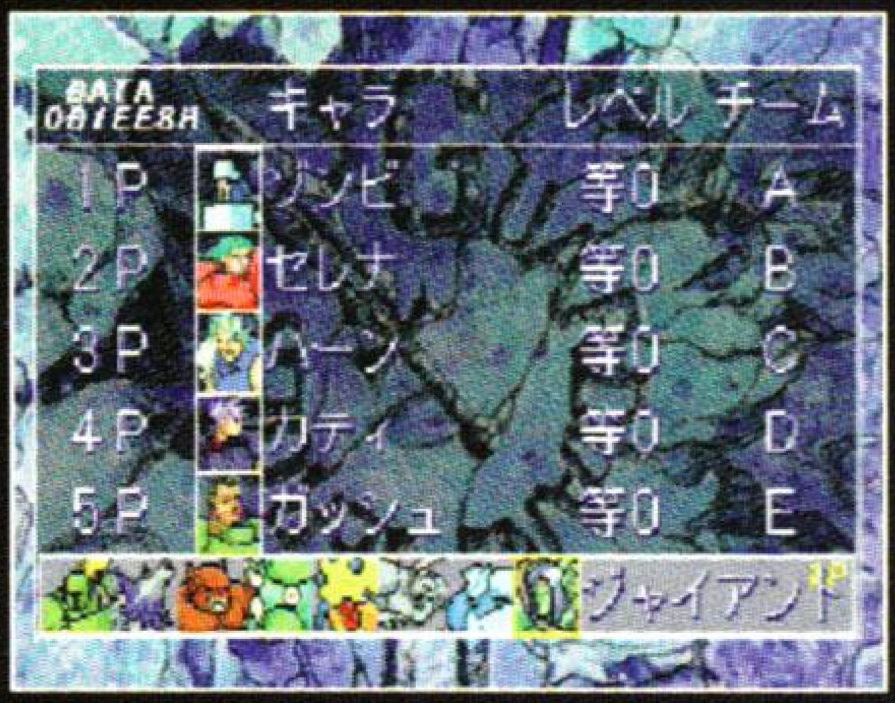
A SPRITE-BASED BEAT 'EM UP UNLIKE ANY SEEN BEFORE!



Guardian Heroes may not look that graphically sophisticated, but Treasure have instead put the visual capabilities of the Saturn to work on creating stunning, yet subtle effects. This effect paid off really well in Super NES Yoshi's Island it works excellently here too.



Guardian Heroes is a left-to-right scrolling affair. However it also takes advantage of three different into-the-screen playfields, similar to those used in the Fatal Fury and King of Fighters titles. What's most impressive, is that when characters are battling at the furthest distance, they aren't obscured by nearer objects, as these actually become transparent!



DATA OBIEESA	キャラ	レベル	チーム
1P	ゾンビ	等0	A
2P	セレナ	等0	B
3P	ハーン	等0	C
4P	ランディ	等0	D
5P	ガッシュ	等0	E

ジャイアント

So, after the state-of-the-art 3D onslaught that was Virtua Fighter 2, Virtua Cop and Sega Rally Championship, what mind-blowing gaming wares can Saturn owners expect from Sega's in-house wizards next? Well, in an extreme departure from the recent super-titles used to demonstrate the Saturn's awesome polygon abilities, Sega's next grade AAA title is none other than a horizontally-scrolling 2D beat 'em up. Not a polygon in sight! None of your fancy-pants texture-mapping and gouraud shading here. Just good old-fashioned sprites... that zoom in and out a lot.

However, before you go making assumptions that this game isn't the kind of next-generation title you expect on the Saturn, let us tell you that Guardian Heroes is the work of Treasure – one of Sega's most revered development teams. With Gunstar Heroes, Dynamite Headdy and Alien Soldier, they systematically revived the status of the ageing Megadrive, proving that sprite-scaling and rotation – previously thought impossible on Sega's 16-bit console – could effectively be created through clever programming techniques. And more than just demonstrating these graphical tricks, they used them to incredible effect, inventing jaw-dropping bosses and fantastical scenery effects, the likes of which had never been seen before. Treasure's games have continually broken the sprite-game mould with their ingenious ideas and even now are a benchmark by which other sprite-based scrollers are measured.

So now they've brought their blistering talents to the Saturn. A machine which, despite the recent run of awesome 3D titles, is actually a powerful sprite-generating gaming platform. More accurately, THE most powerful sprite-generating gaming platform around. And Treasure have made the most of this particular strength with Guardian Heroes. You'd be hard pushed to find a game with more on-screen sprite mayhem than this. Masses of characters battling away all the time, explosions clouding the screen, sparks flying from every weapon. The multi-layered backdrops even scale back and forth to frame the action! Guardian Heroes proves that 2D games aren't just 16-bit territory. This game is every bit as technically proficient as the masses of 32-bit 3D titles doing the rounds.

IT'S ALMOST A NEW GENRE OF GAME IN ITSELF!

At its simplest level, Guardian Heroes is best described as a scrolling beat 'em up. However, to be fair there's far more to this game than that. Treasure have always concentrated on bringing original gameplay elements to their titles, rather than just churning out something flashy, but ultimately uninspiring. Guardian Heroes' originality goes further than just a few novel in-game elements. The actual game itself is an fresh new concept, combining the traits of a scrolling beat 'em up, a one-on-one beat 'em up and an RPG to produce an all-new kind of action adventure. This is a sword-and-sorcery fighting game with all the hacking, slashing, martial arts and magic you'd expect from a Golden Axe-type affair, only with a deeply involving plot to match. A plot that actually develops depending on decisions made by the player throughout the game.

ALL THE DEPTH OF AN RPG IN A FIGHTING FEST!

The main game option in Guardian Heroes is the epic Story Mode. It's herein that the huge adventure scenario unfolds. At the time of writing, **MAXIMUM** was only able to playtest a Japanese-text version of the game, as the official UK version was still undergoing the extensive translation process. Nonetheless, whilst the subtleties of plot detail may have been lost to us, the game is still FULLY playable without the story. It's just more mysterious. Not that we mind. Here at **MAXIMUM** we like any extra challenge we can get.

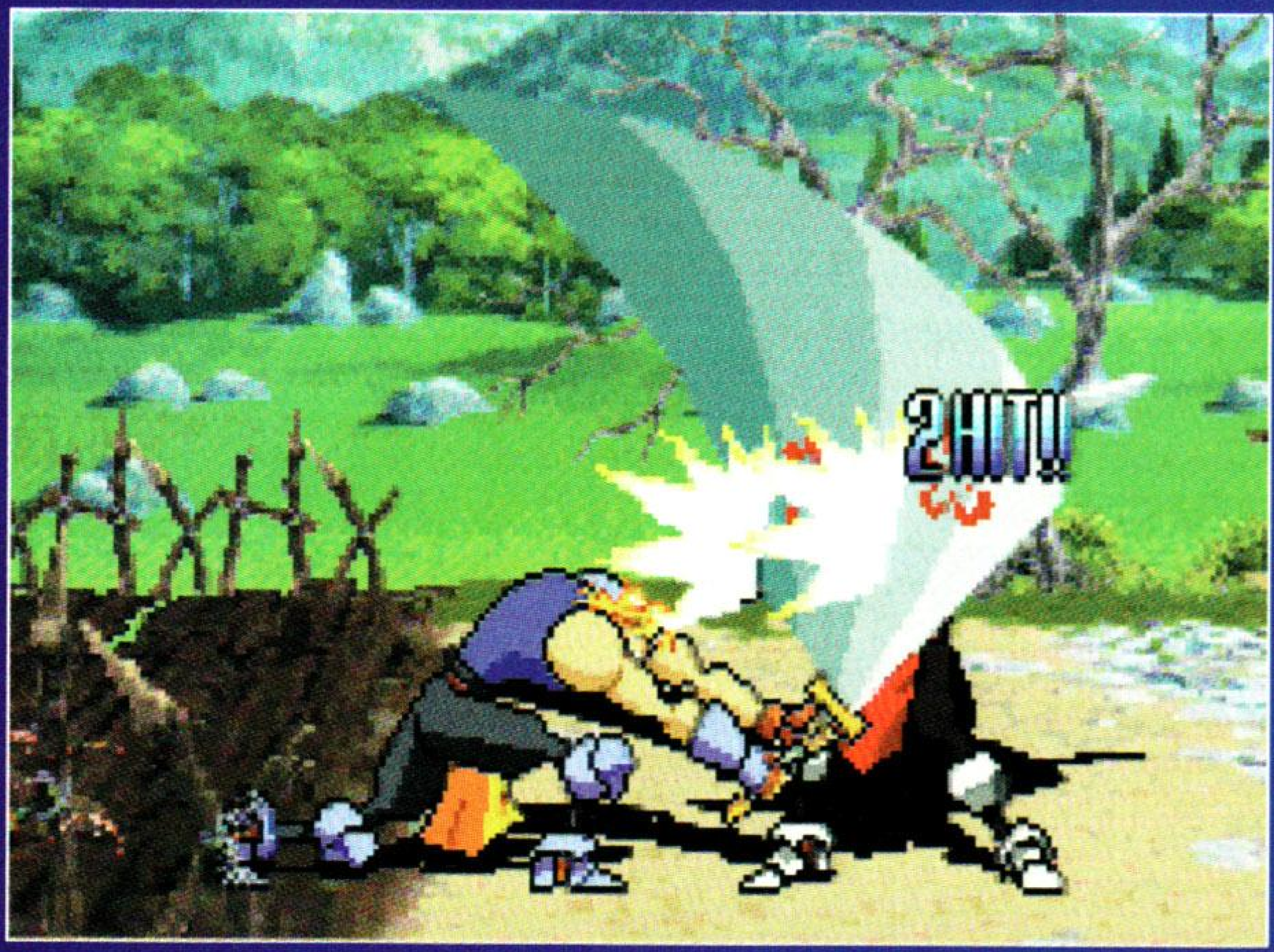
TWO INCREDIBLE GAMING MODES – STORY AND VERSUS! SIX-PLAYERS CAN FACE OFF IN MIGHTY BATTLE CONFRONTATIONS!

The game takes place in a land known as The Kingdom, ruled over by King Wan and his Knight Corps. Once things were peaceful, but of late things have taken a turn for the worse. The Knights are running wild in the land, treating the common people with cruelty and disregard. While such behaviour towards mere underlings is something **MAXIMUM** can identify with, nay, even respect, it is obviously not a pleasure enjoyed by all superior beings. Enter the Guardian Heroes themselves. A band of warriors once loyal to the realm, who, unhappy with the current turn of events, have decided to put a stop the current spate of foul deeds. However, during a meeting at a local tavern, their plans are interrupted by a surprise raid of Kingdom soldiers. And so the game begins. What terrible truths the Guardian Heroes uncover during their adventure, all depends on what paths are taken through Story Mode. Something we cover in more detail later in this Extended Play. First though, we need to take a closer look at the heroes themselves.

SIX MIGHTY WARRIORS AWAIT YOU! TWO PLAYERS CAN TEAM UP FOR A FANTASTICAL QUEST!

STRENGTH:	8
VITALITY:	7
INTELLIGENCE:	3
MENTALITY:	5
AGILITY:	3
LUCK:	4

No band of swashbuckling warriors would be complete with a muscle-bound, heroic leader. Clearly then, the Guardian Heroes are an incomplete team. For, whilst Harn maybe muscle-bound and heroic, he isn't the team leader. Nonetheless, Harn is a vital element of the Heroes. An ex-member of the Blue Kingdom Knight Corps, he has turned his back on the knights, believing them to be an unjust instrument for a corrupt power. Now his once best friend – Dead-Eye Gasher, leader of the Blue Kingdom Knight Corps – has been instructed to hunt down and destroy Harn. Does he perform this dread deed or does he see sense and join his quarry in his quest for justice?

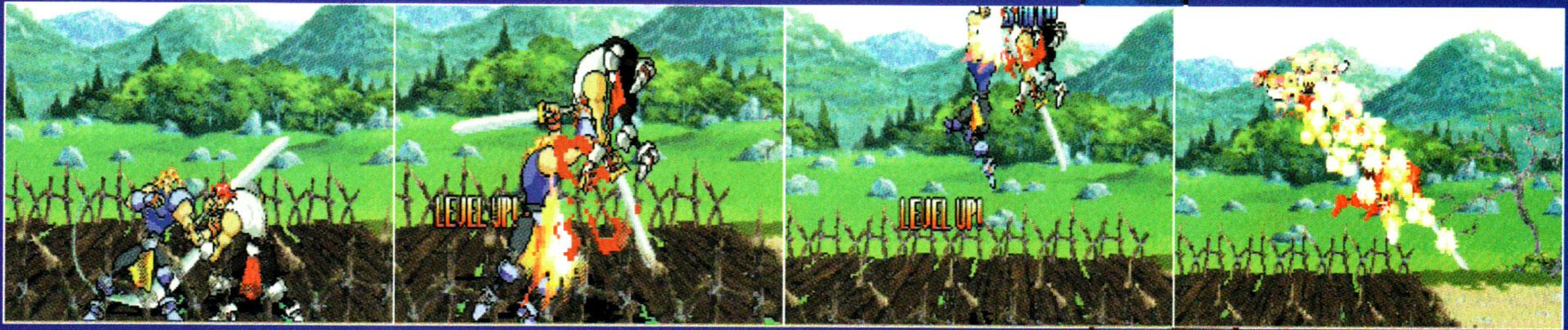


A LETHAL SWORD-WIELDER, BUT HIS MAGIC IS PAP!

Harn is without doubt the strongest of the Guardian Heroes, with most of his moves based around the massive sword he wields. Purist beat 'em up fans will definitely find themselves at home with Harn's non-fanciful, but extremely powerful range of physical attacks. His rising dragon-style sword uppercut is particularly impressive, especially when followed by his Harn Maximum – a deadly drop attack that envelops him in flames, incinerating any opponents he comes in contact with. Other notable specials include his dashing attack which, while leaving a tracer shadow behind him, topples any foes in his way. Harn is definitely a fighting favourite – all the more so if you can find the legendary sword that turns him into... SuperHarn!

THE MIGHTIEST OF ALL THE HEROES...

HARN SAMUEL

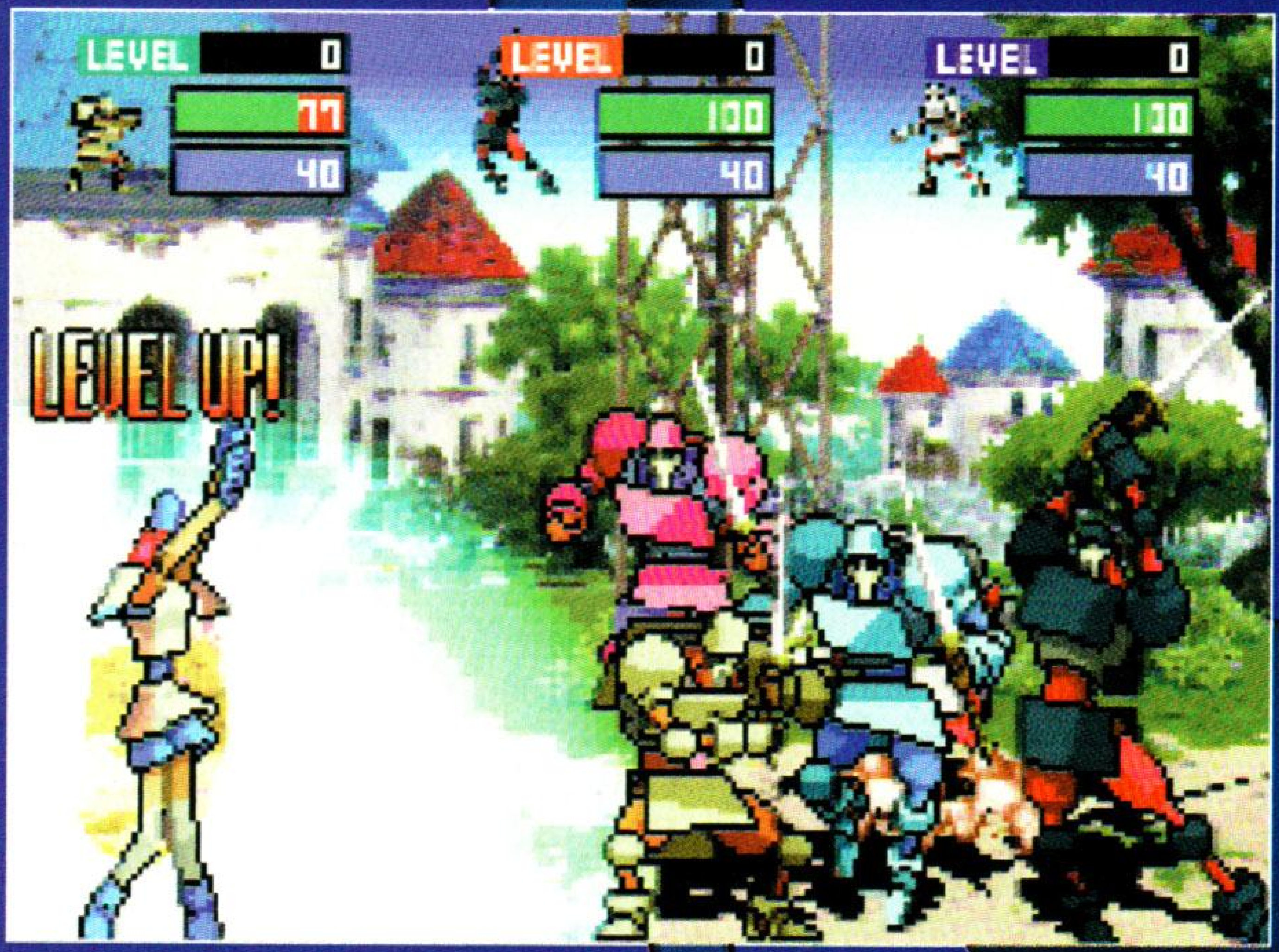


Here, Harn is demonstrating what he does best - the liberal application of his amazing swordplay. Strong on physical attacks but comparatively weedy when it comes to the power of sorcery, Harn is a reasonable character.

THE PRIESTESS WITH THE LEASTEST...

NICHOLA NEIL

STRENGTH:	4
VITALITY:	4
INTELLIGENCE:	4
MENTALITY:	8
AGILITY:	6
LUCK:	4

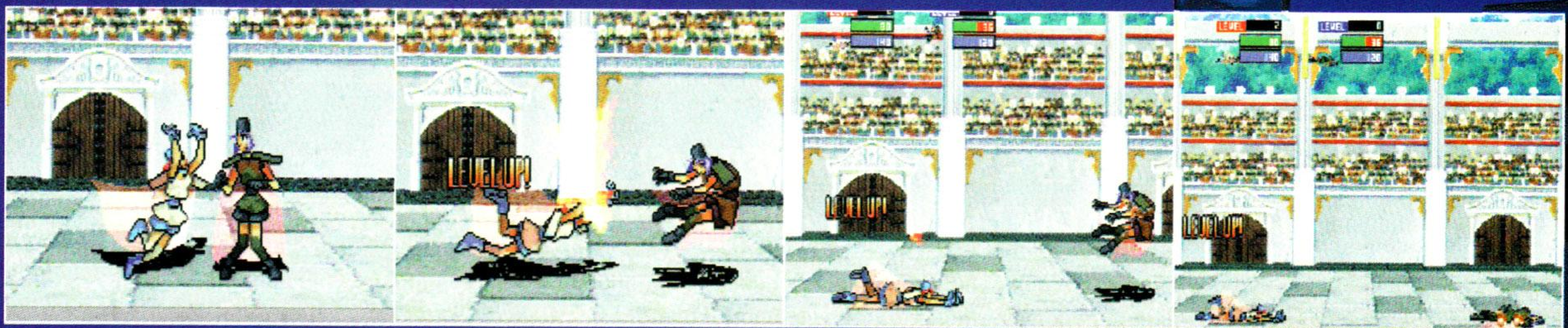


A priestess of the Kingdom, Nichola Neil is a follower of the ancient magic lores. However, the strange happenings of late have also affected the behaviour of certain fellow Kingdom priests. Towns of innocent people have supposedly been brainwashed into joining strange cults led by rogue priests. And those that resist have found that ancient artifacts they've worshipped for centuries have turned against them. What is causing these wayward antics of the priests? Could there be some darker gods in control?

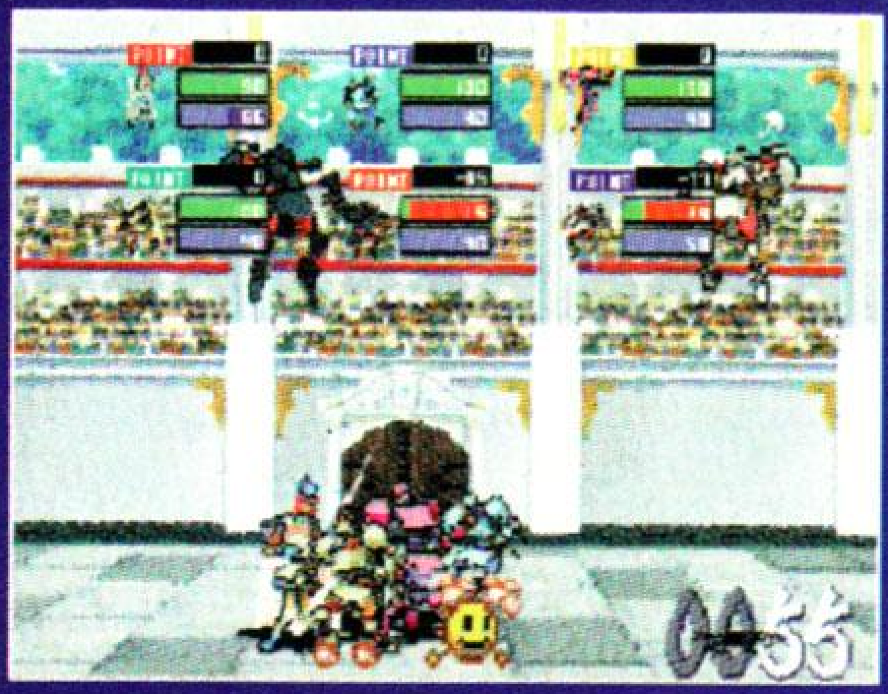
SHE HAS THE POWER OF FALLING OVER! WOO!

Nichola, it has to be said, is without a doubt the weakest member of the team. She has virtually no physical attacks of any consequence to her name. And what magic she does have is designed to shield or heal her. Although she does possess a few unusual magic attacks that cause smiley faces (of various sizes depending on the power of the magic) to shower from the sky. Also, she has a tendency to fall over. Don't complain though. This, amazingly enough, is one of her better moves, causing any nearby enemies to lose their balance! Players controlling Nichola can complete the game with the help of the Undead Hero, but in truth she's better used in conjunction with another player.

"I CAN EXORCISE BEELZEBUB FROM THE PITS OF YOUR SOUL!"



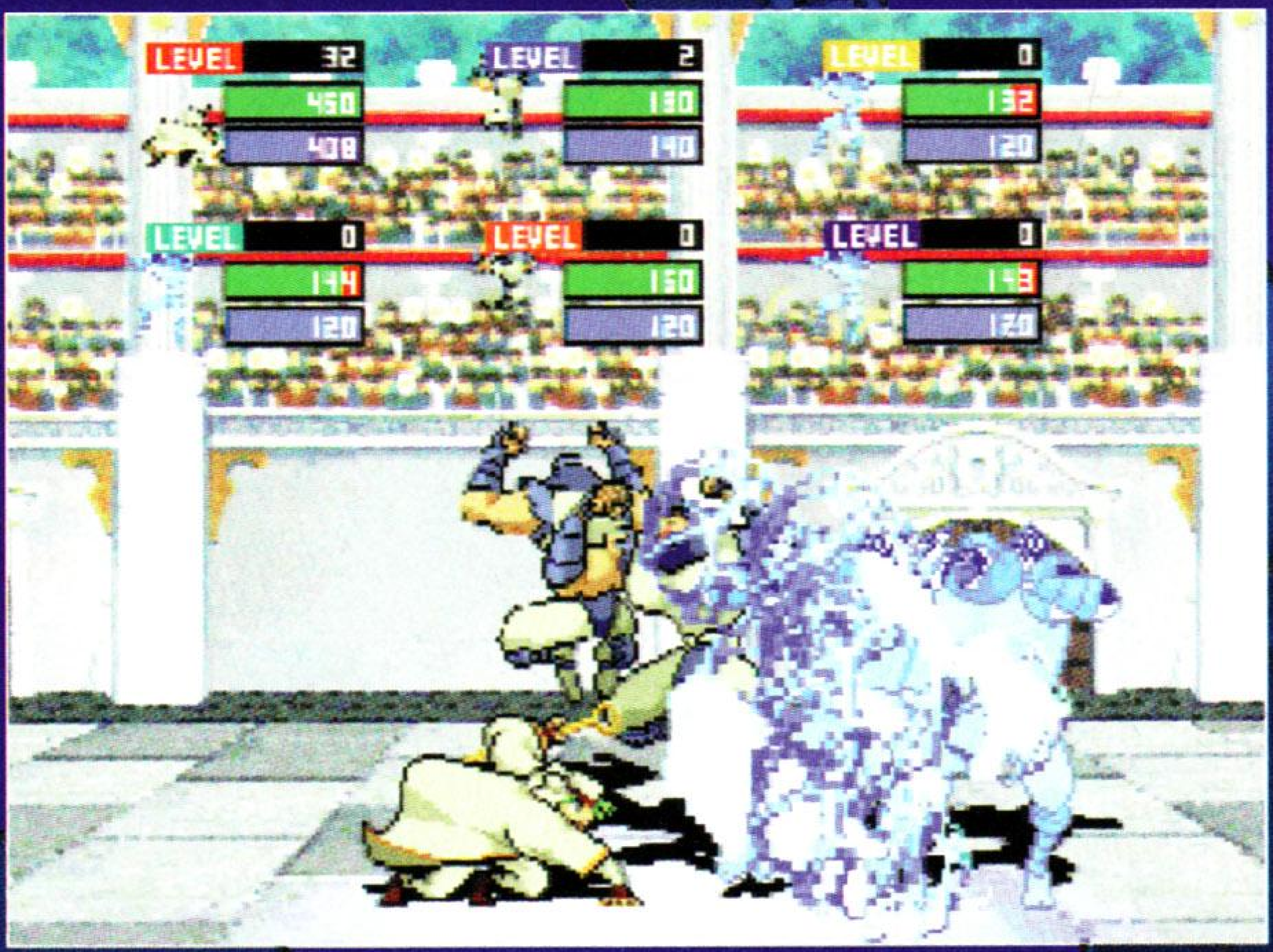
Oh dear. Usually female characters in fighting games tend to be pretty powerful (like Sarah Bryant or Michelle Chang) but not in this case. Nichola Neil is a tragic figure when it comes to hand-to-hand fighting and her magic isn't exactly marvellous either.



STRENGTH:	3
VITALITY:	2
INTELLIGENCE:	9
MENTALITY:	9
AGILITY:	5
LUCK:	2

SHE'S A SORCEROR SUPREME WITH A SAUCY NAME...

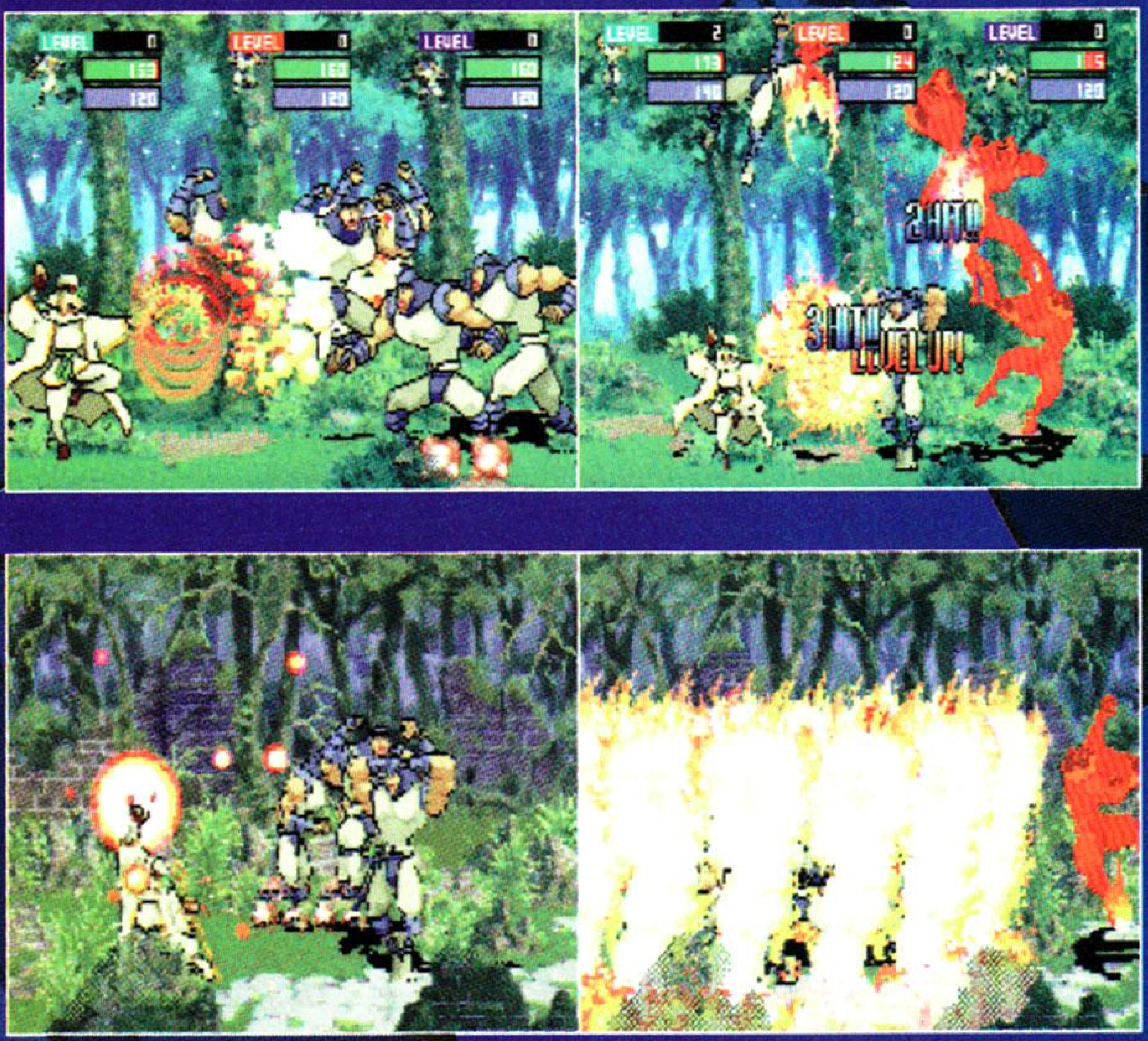
RANDY M GREEN



The mysterious Ms Green is an extremely powerful magician, although by the standards of the Kingdom Magicians' Guild she is merely an apprentice. The Magicians' Guild in question however, are actually the reason behind Randy's involvement in the Guardian Heroes movement. The dark mages of the realm have long been jealous of the popularity enjoyed by the Kingdom Knights and, with the current unrest in the country, they are in a position to seize advantage of the situation. Rumour has it that they are working on a mysterious 'magic weapon'. What can this be? Are they behind the recent spate of strange goings on? Perhaps only Randy can defeat this army of wizards.

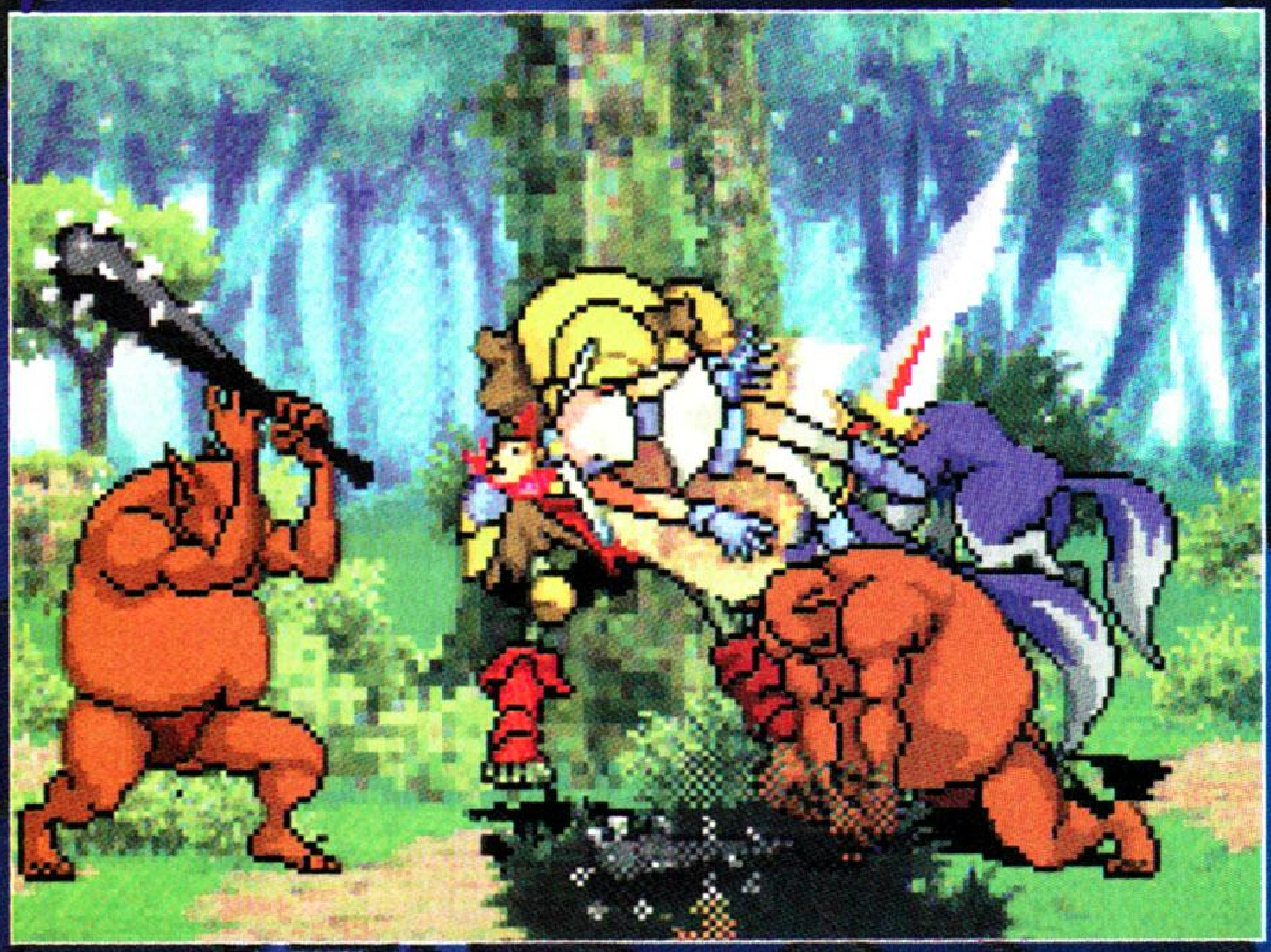
MONSTROUS MAGIC POWERS AT HER COMMAND!

As physical weapons go, Randy is particularly adept with her quarterstaff, using it to perform a number of twirling moves, including a rising helicopter attack. Impressive as these moves actually look, they are surprisingly ineffectual at producing large damage quotas. Far better is Randy's lethal range of magic attacks – by far the greatest range of spells of any of the main characters. From electrifying vertical thunderbolts and full-on laser blasts, to deadlier trademark moves such as the Super Magic Tornado and Super Magic Firewall, Randy is a formidable opponent.

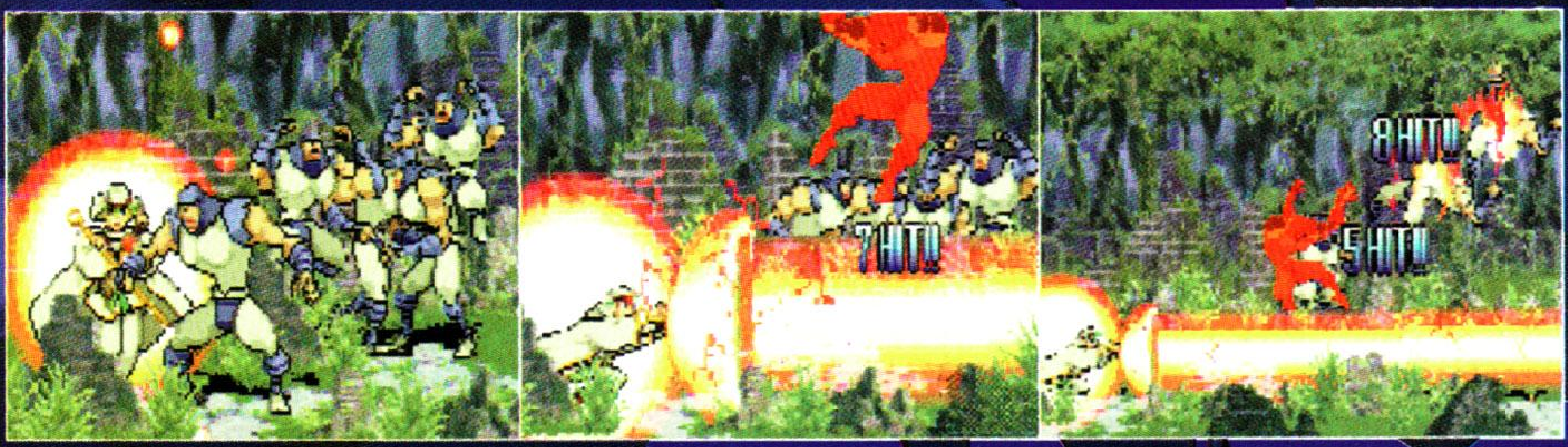


Behold the sorcerous power of master mage Randy M Green! She uses her physical weapon as part of her magical power and can unleash the very flames of Hades on all who oppose her!

"I CAN'T TURN YOU INTO A FROG, BUT I CAN TURN YOU INTO A HAMBURGER!"



"EEK EEK, I SHALL CRUSH YOUR PUNY SKULL, HALFWIT!"



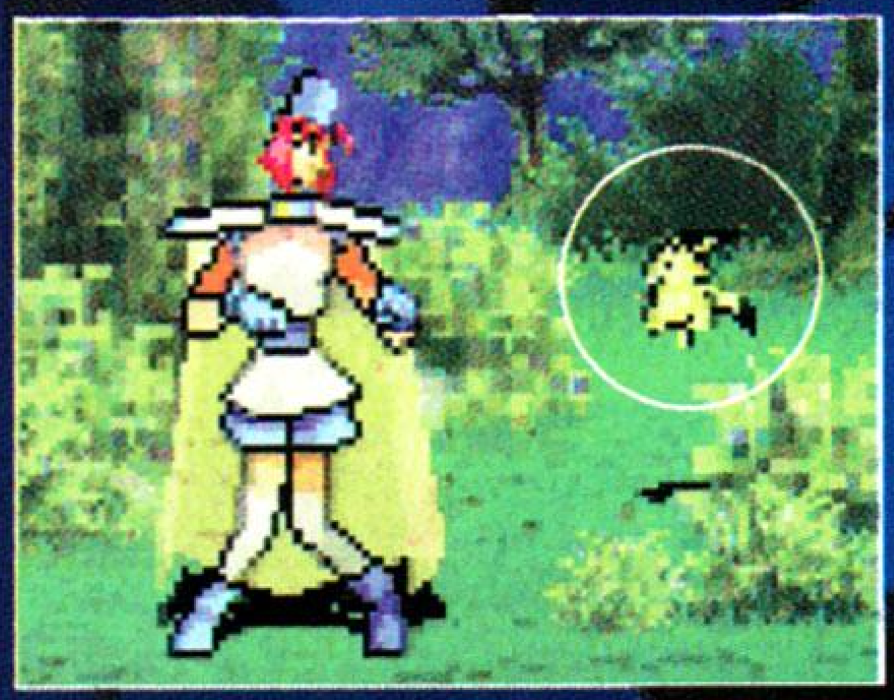
Randy M Green shows that she's a fighter NOT to be messed with! Armed a multitude of powerful magical attacks, there is no doubting that she is a useful ally to the Guardian Heroes. Let there be no doubt about her skills.

242
147
LEVEL 51
LEVEL UP!

MEET THE MAGICIAN'S ASSISTANT ... A RABBIT!

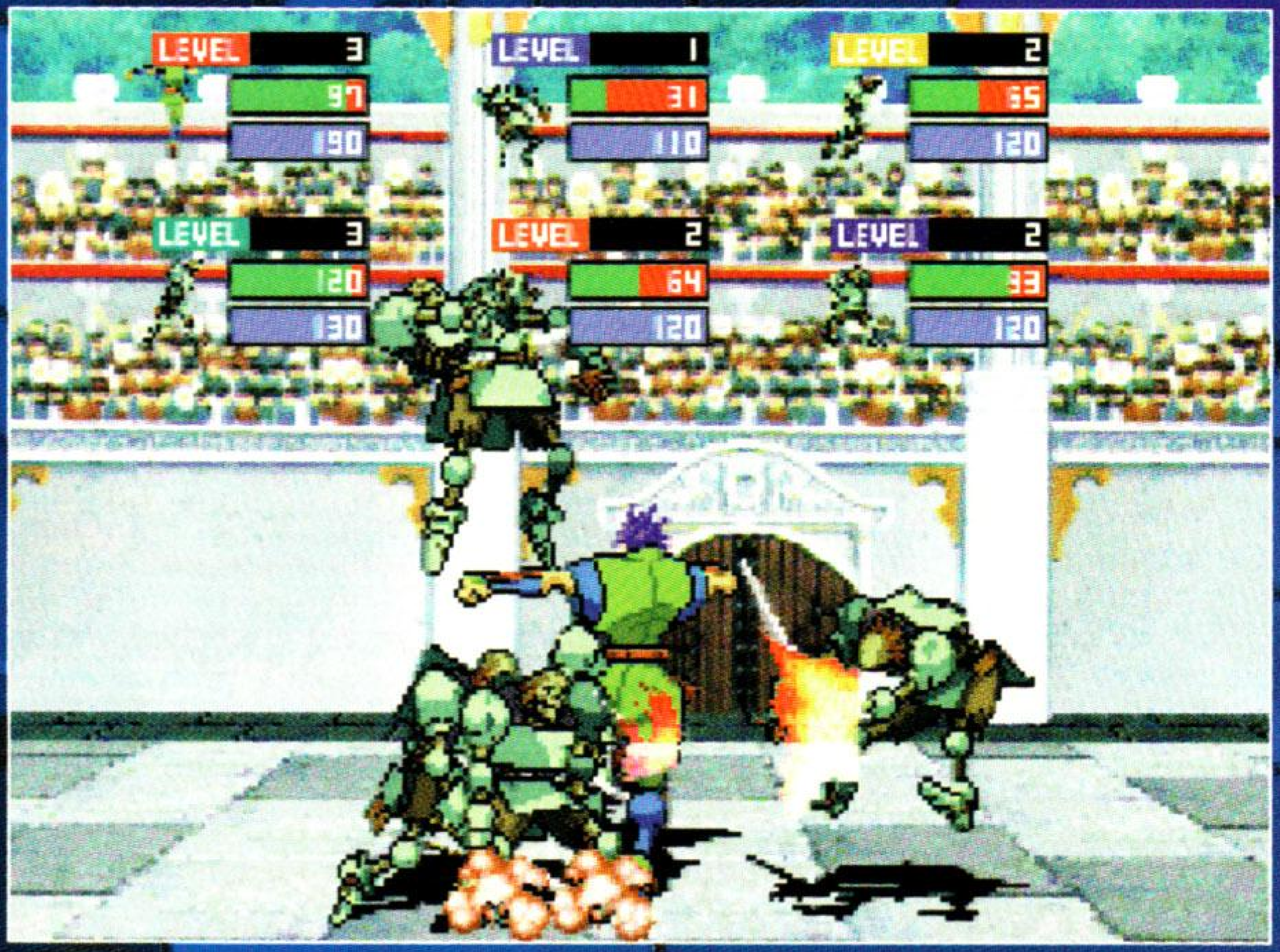
EDWARD M COGNAC

Adding to her potency as a fighting character, Randy has an ace-in-the-hole. A rabbit-in-the-hat so to speak. Quite literally! Unlike most magician's pets though, Edward M Cognac is a rabbit possessed of enough raw power to defeat even the most potent enemies. The player controlling Randy can also take control of Ed any time they wish. Pressing GUARD in a direction allows him to be moved around, punching ineffectually at foes. Hold the attack buttons though and he unleashes the E-MAX, turning him into a deadly homing fireball that bounces around the screen.



A NINJA MASTER ON A MISSION OF REVENGE...

IBUSHI GINJIROU



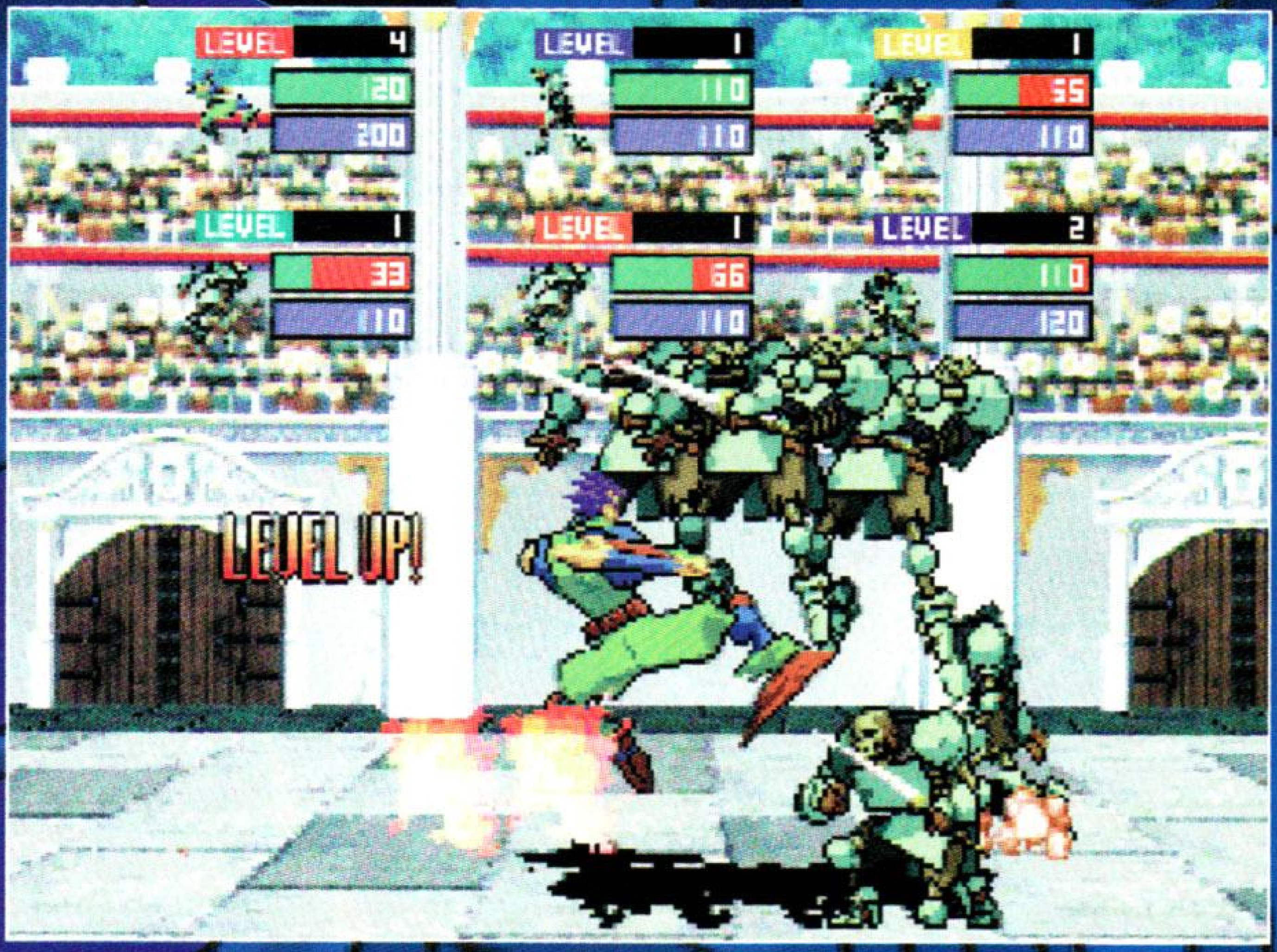
STRENGTH:	2
VITALITY:	3
INTELLIGENCE:	5
MENTALITY:	6
AGILITY:	4
LUCK:	10

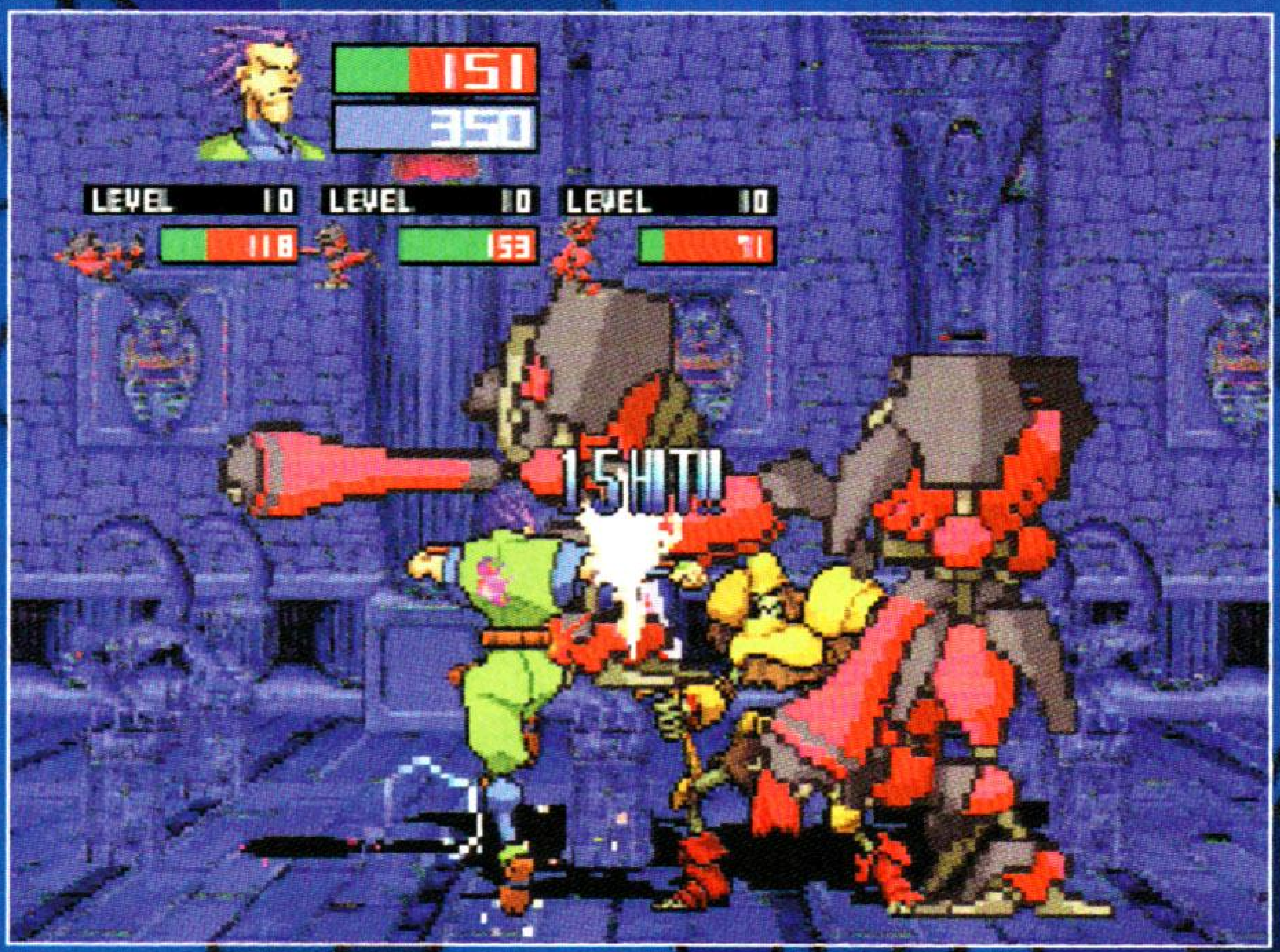
Little is known about this mysterious ninja. He has, however, joined the team for a purpose, although it isn't to do with the cause against the Kingdom Knights. Rather he seeks to defeat a fellow ninja known as Sambo. Easier said than done though, as this ninja has teamed up with a group of outlaws led by a Hakkyoku fighting fist master known as Macho. These outlaws have been terrorising the highways for a long time now. It's unclear whose side they're on, if any at all. Will they join Ginjirou or will he need the help of the Guardian Heroes to defeat them?

HYPER-ACROBATICS AND NINJA MAGIC!

Ginjirou could well be the deadliest of all the Guardian Heroes. Quite surprising when you consider that he doesn't use any other weapon than a dagger! He does however, have an amazing range of magical and martial arts based attacks. Dagger uppercuts, helicopter kicks and pirouetting attacks hallmark his particular brand of acrobatic combat, while his magic draws its inspiration from thunder and lightning. His lightning fist, when connecting correctly, can inflict a massive 150 hits!

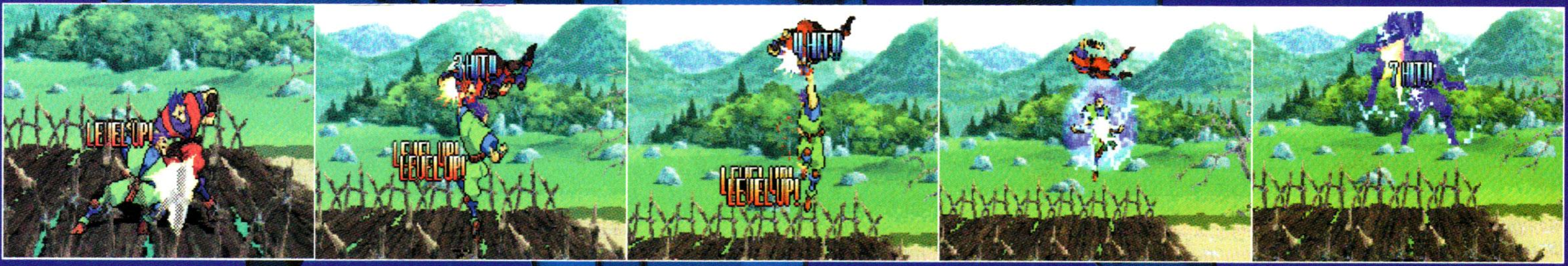
MASTER THE STEALTHY ARTS OF GINJIROU!

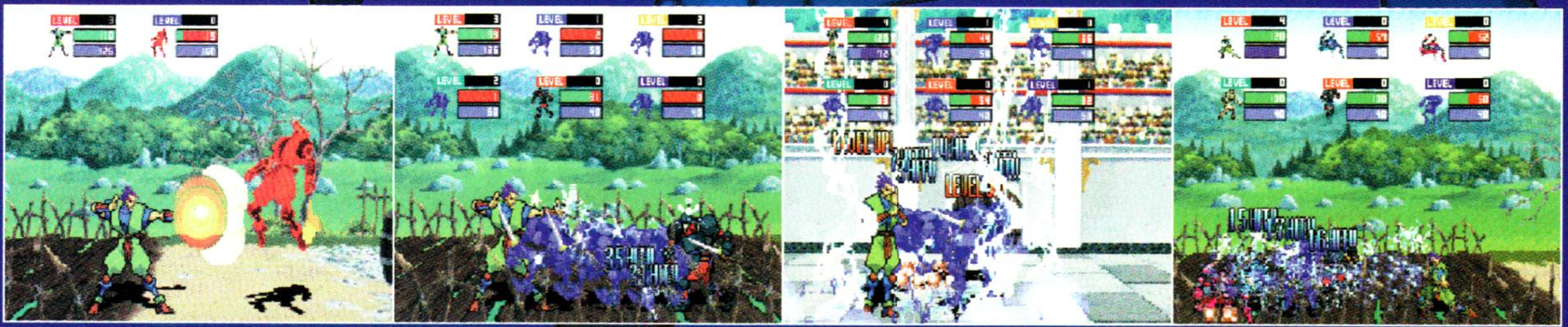




Ginjirou comes from a healthy background of videogames ninjas such as Shinobi's Joe Mushashi and Final Fight's Guy - but none of them have quite the power of Guardian Heroes' ninja! Unleash his terrifying power and score up to 150 hits on his helpless foes!

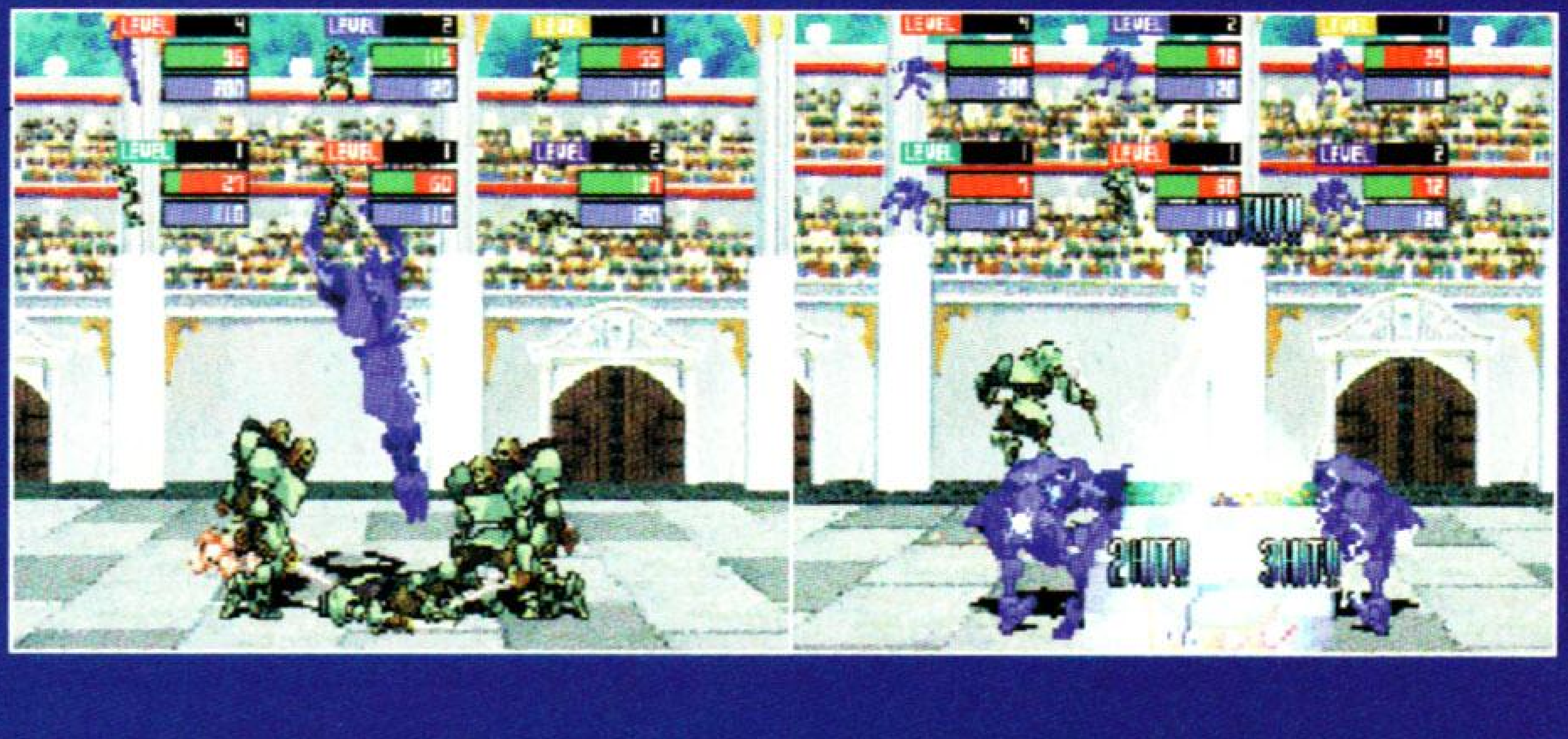
"TELL JOE MUSASHI TO GO COLLECT HIS PENSION BOOK!"





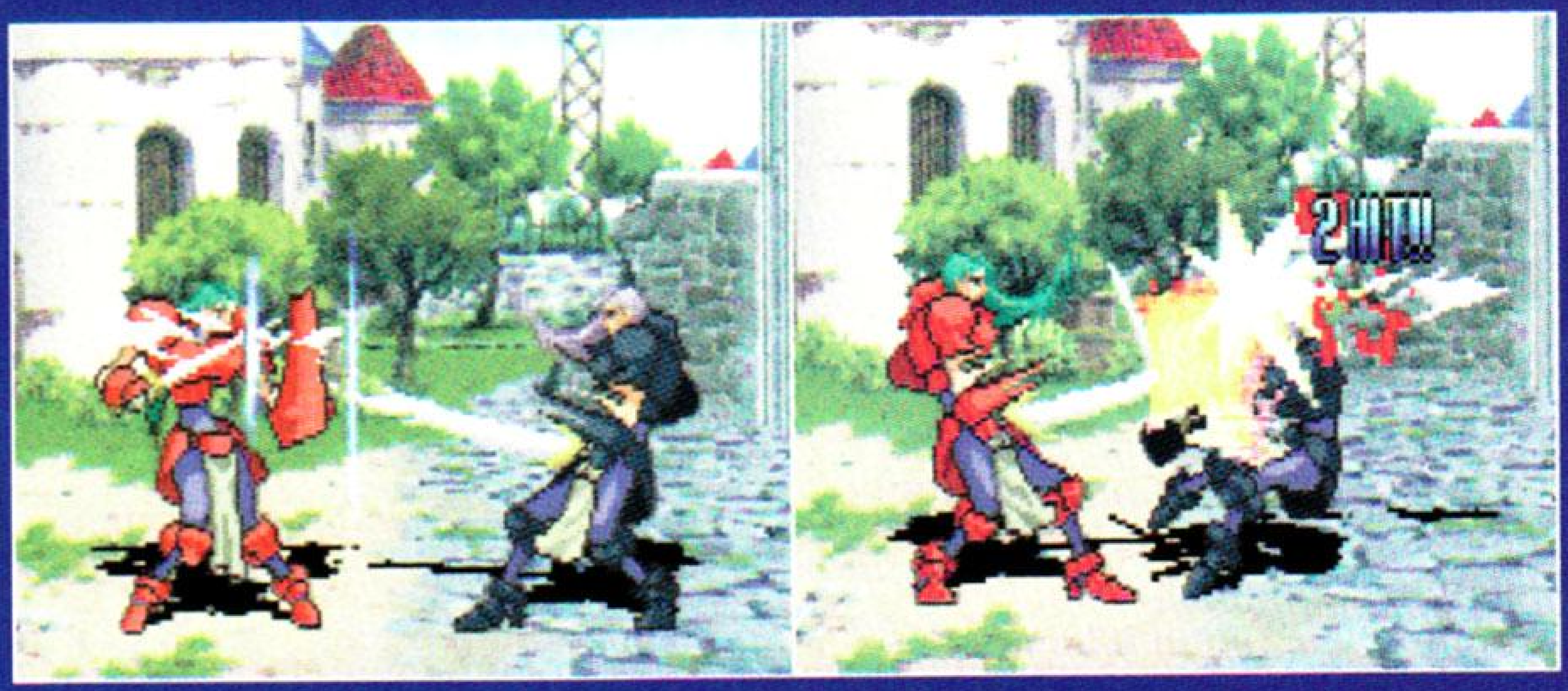
Ginjirou shows off his magical powers in the sequences surrounding this caption. Fast, agile and deceptively powerful, this guy can more than hold his own when in the company of powerful characters such as Harn Samuel. Although not heavily armed, his physical attacks and magical strikes are perfectly balanced, providing players with a fighter who is a joy to control.

Although he is the luckiest of the Guardian Heroes, this ninja also relies heavily on some excellent ninja magic. Behold above as he decimates an army of enemy sprites, sparing no mercy!



BEAT THE GAME TO ACCESS THE EXTRA GUARDIAN HERO!!

SELENA CORSAIR



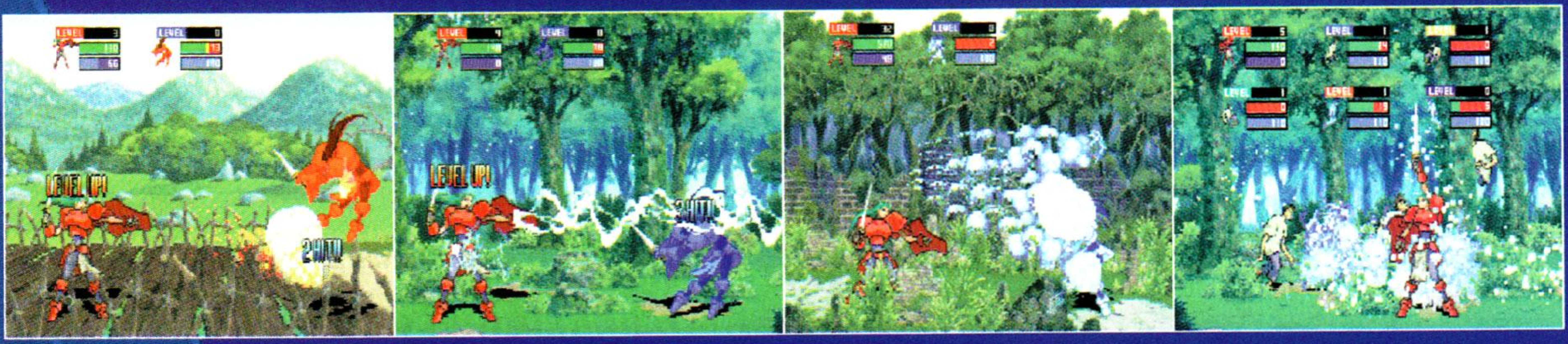
STRENGTH:	5
VITALITY:	5
INTELLIGENCE:	5
MENTALITY:	5
AGILITY:	5
LUCK:	5

If ever there's a leader to this team, Selena is that person. The ex-leader of the Kingdom Red Knight Corps, Selena knows there's something wrong in the land. Reinhart Vulgar, a prince and head of the Kingdom Black Knight Corps has ordered her death and replaced her with a new commander, an ambitious female knight known as Cutty Sark. With a price on her head, Selena only has so much time to uncover the secret behind the rising evil, save the Kingdom and clear her name.

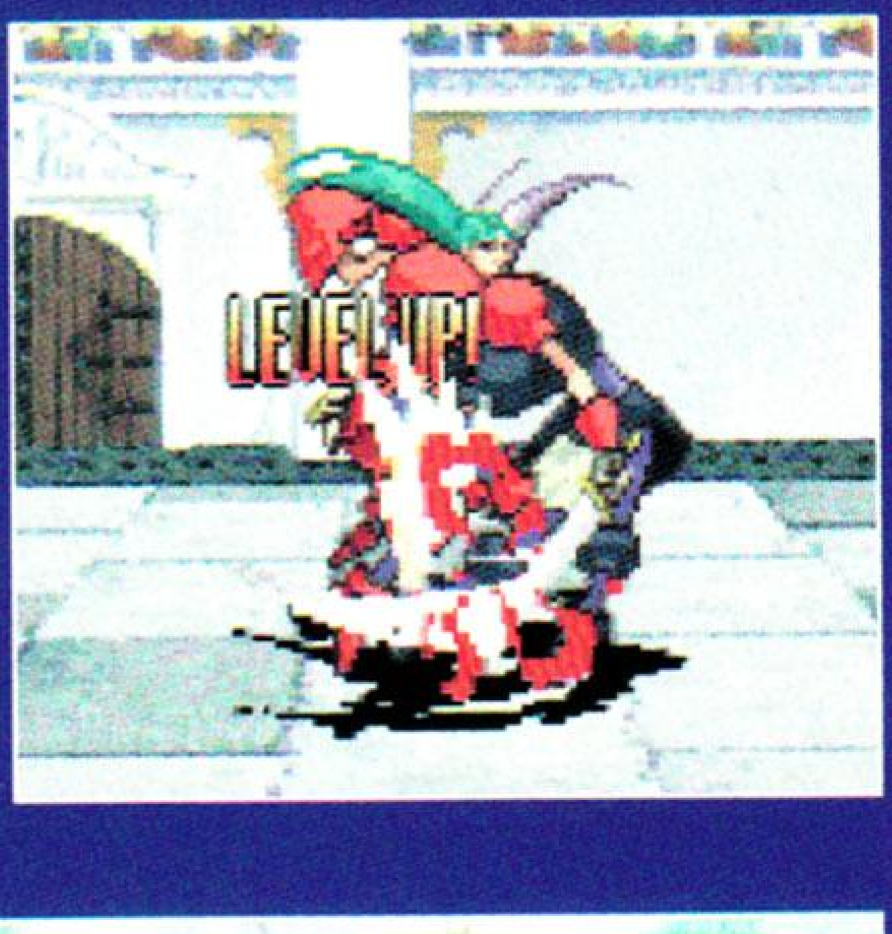
A WHIRLING DERVISH OF SWORD DEATH!

Although Selena makes appearances throughout Story Mode, she only becomes selectable once you've completed the game once through. As you can see from her stats, she's balanced out in all her skills and this is reflected in her wide ranging physical and magic attacks. She certainly isn't average though! A blinding array of twirling sword attacks and acrobatic somersault moves makes her an excellent character to control. Her magic moves too, such as Valkyrie Javelin and Angel Breath blizzard attack are lethal. Beware though – her magic is powerful but soon leaves her drained, at which time she collapses exhausted, and vulnerable, for a crucial few seconds.

"EVER PICKED UP YOUR TEETH WITH BROKEN FINGERS?"

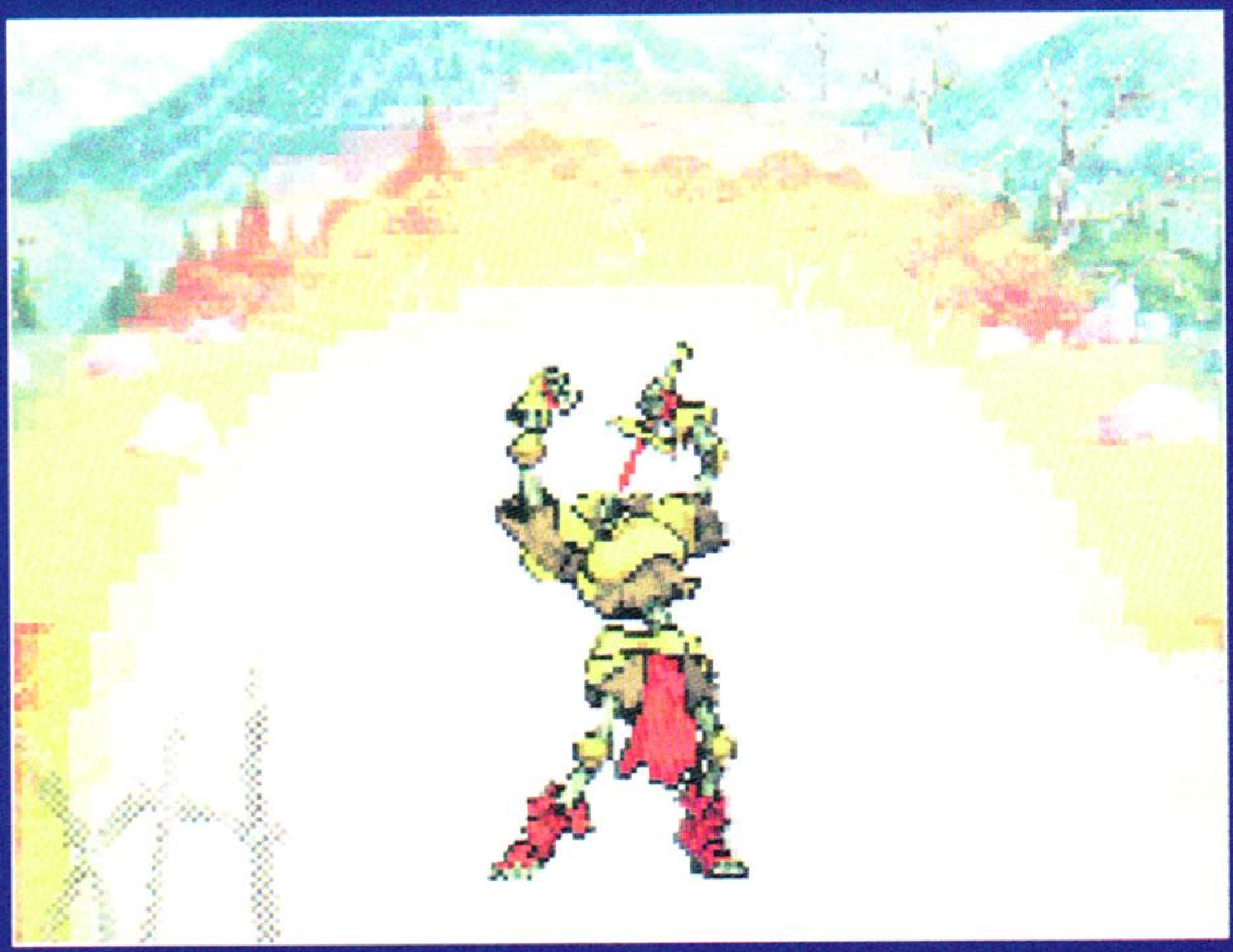


Selena Corsair is defintely a great character to have in your group of Guardian Heroes and the fact that you have to beat the game to get her is all the more reason to keep on playing!



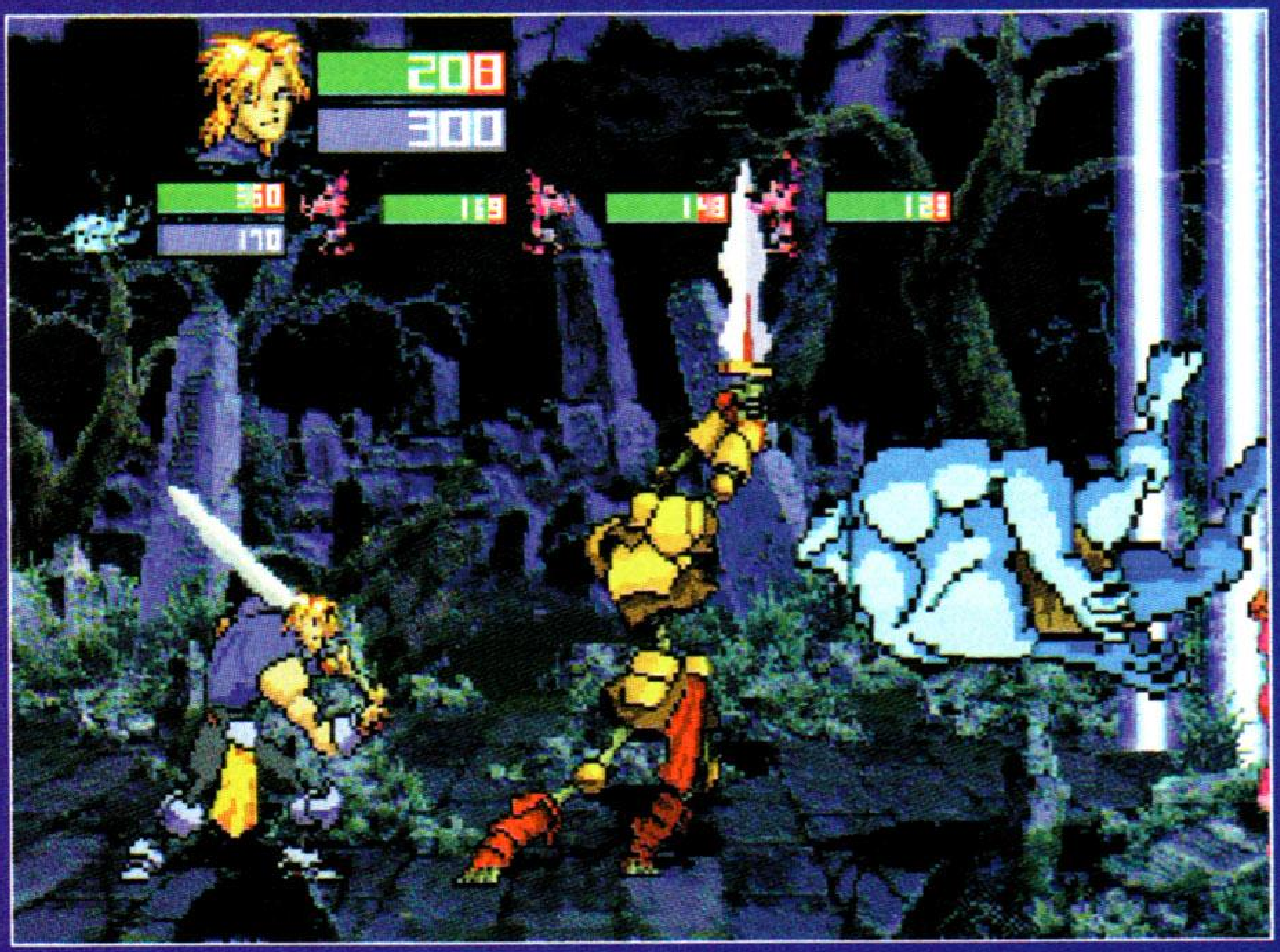
HE IS A WARRIOR FROM A FORGOTTEN PAST...

THE UNDEAD HERO



STRENGTH:	?
VITALITY:	?
INTELLIGENCE:	?
MENTALITY:	?
AGILITY:	?
LUCK:	?

The final member of the Guardian Heroes is quite definitely the most bizarre of them all. His first appearance in the game is also one of the most dramatic scenes of the Story Mode. An undead hero from another age, this golden armour-clad warrior bursts from his ancient burial ground at the end of level one, summoned by the legendary sword wielded by Harn. A sword that was once wielded by this warrior himself over 30,000 years ago! Reclaiming his sword, he then defeats the enemies of the heroes and joins their force. Harn-fans need not weep at losing their sword though. There is another identical legendary sword in the game, wielded by another undead warrior. And this sword grants Harn even more power than before.

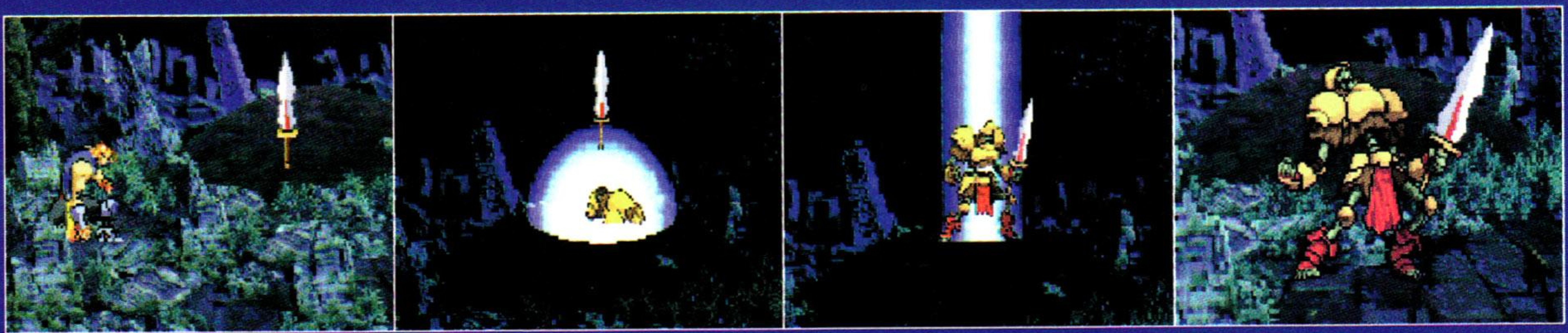


THE CREATURE IS YOURS TO COMMAND!

Unlike the other Guardian Heroes, the Undead Hero is not a fully controllable character in Story Mode. He serves more of a 'Tails' purpose, following the other players around and fighting any foes he confronts. He can, however, be given basic commands to obey. In a similar fashion to the way each character can summon magic, a thought bubble can be brought up above the player one character. A series of icons can then be scrolled through this bubble, each with a different order for the undead one. Simple tasks include Attack Everything, Shield Me, Stand Behind, or Do Nothing. The final icon sends the Undead Hero into a berserker mood, first slashing at everything before charging up its magic and unleashing a nuclear blast destroying all, but the most powerful foes. This golden sidekick is so effective, he can almost do all the work for you. Expert players though, would be advised to set him on 'Do Nothing' whenever possible, otherwise you won't gain any vital experience points.

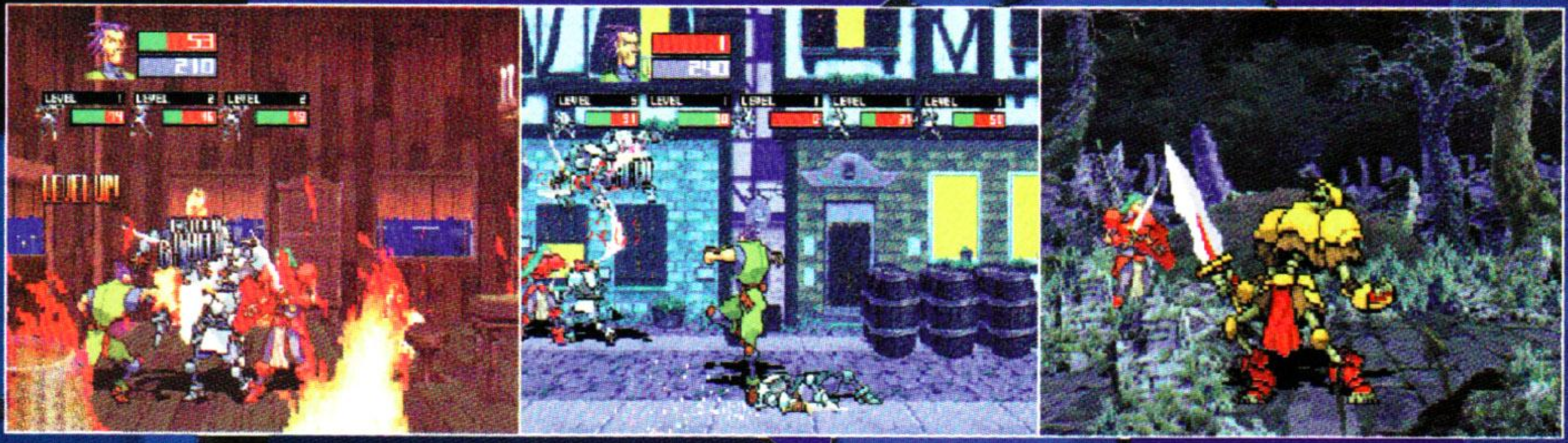
"RAAAARGHHH! WHERE IS MINE FLESH?"

Although undoubtedly an eye-catching and powerful character, the Undead Warrior is always controlled by the computer in Story Mode. Still, there's plenty of other awesome heroes to find in this awesome adventure.



STORY MODE – MULTIPLE ROUTES MEAN NO GAME IS EVER THE SAME!

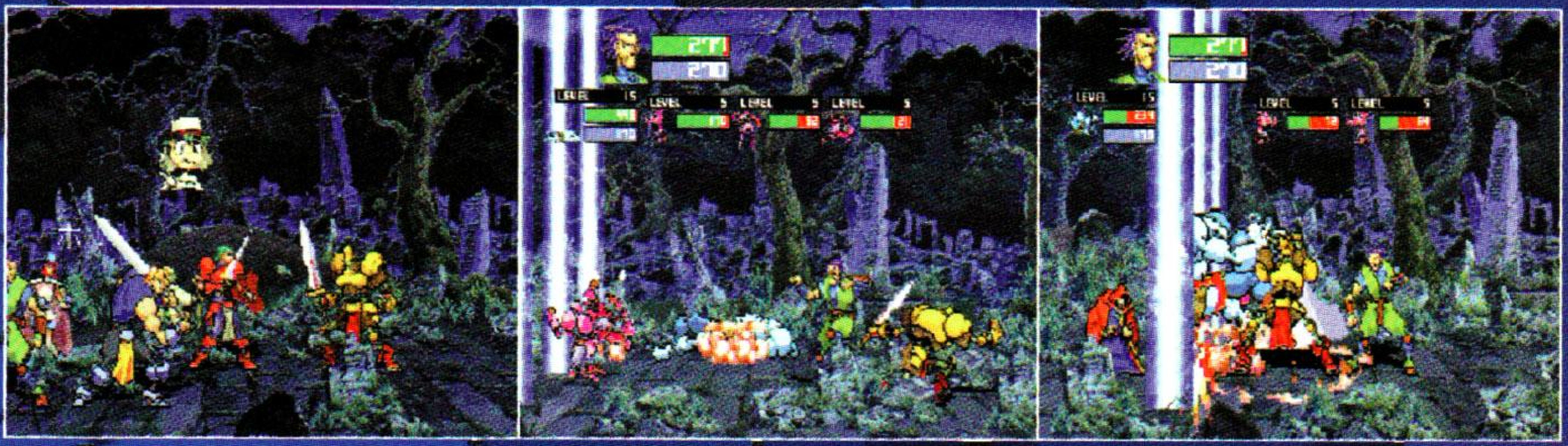
By now you should have a pretty good idea of how the characters weigh up in the fighting stakes. And no doubt, their backgrounds give some clue to the kind of encounters you can expect from Story Mode. However, the actual diversity of paths you can take through this game are more than you would ever have previously expected from a mere scrolling beat 'em up. Story Mode features at least 30 levels of scrolling action. And in no way is the set up of these levels linear. At the end of almost every one, you get a choice of two or more paths. Each of which give you the chance to follow whichever plot interests you more. Do you chase after the escaping boss from the stage you've just completed? Or track down some other evil in the nearby village? The possibilities are endless. Nearly.

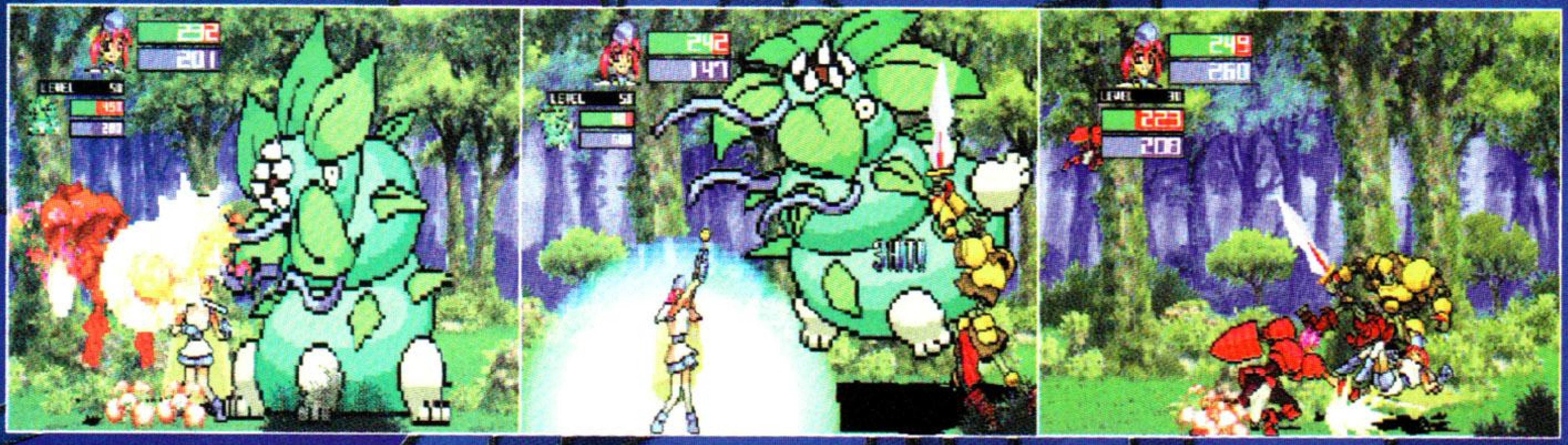


"AFTER THREE THOUSAND YEARS... FINALLY I AM REBORN!"

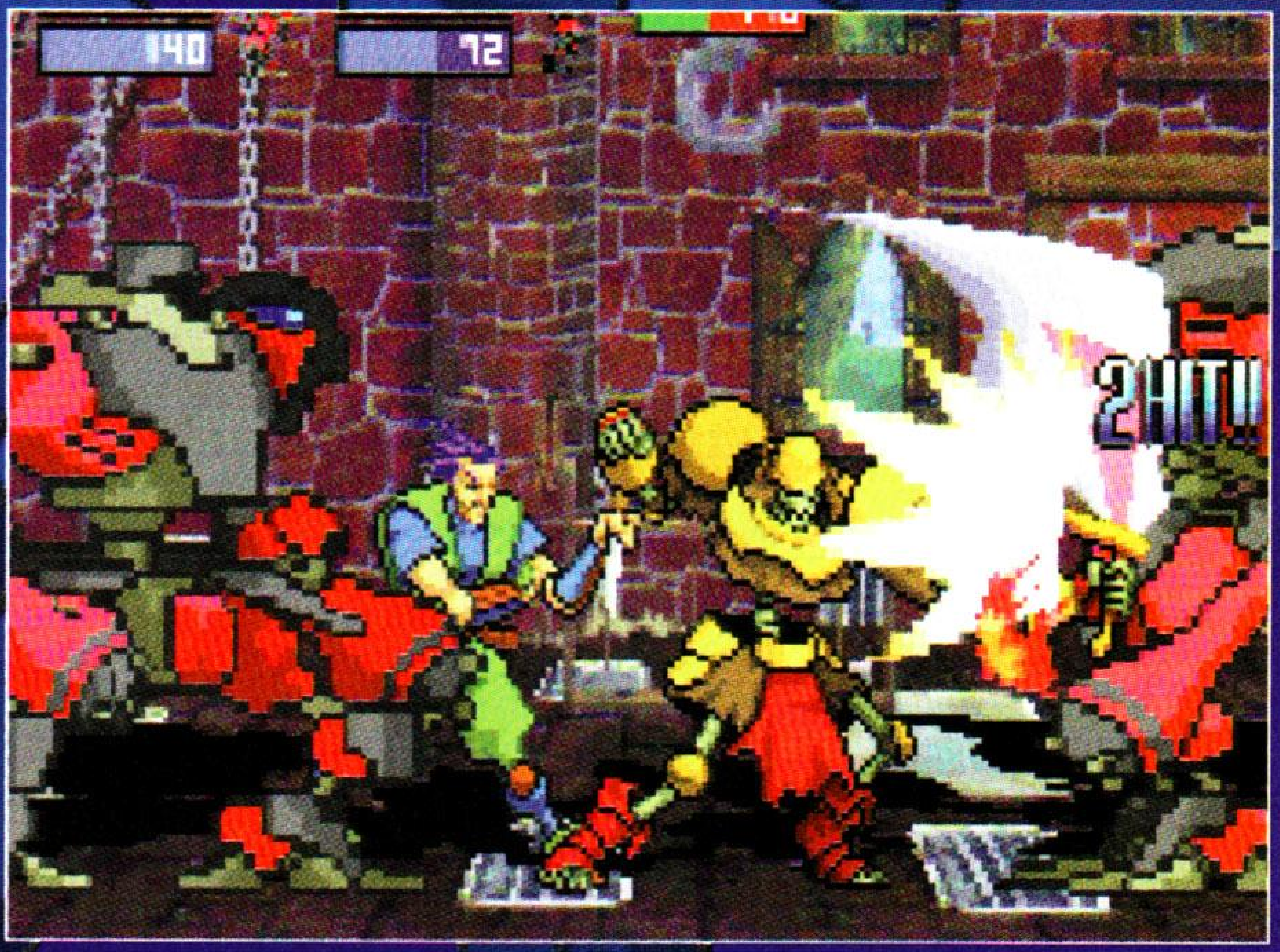
Level one sets the stage for the upcoming adventure. Discovered by guards, the heroes have to battle their way out of the increasingly dangerous house-fire. Once out into the street, the fight proper begins as the Kingdom warriors attack the team from all sides. The fight leads to an old cemetery where a giant robot unleashes a deadly attack.

The robot attack is interrupted by the appearance of the Undead Hero! After attacking Harn, his sword floats above an unmarked grave, where a huge beam claims it. Then, rising from the soil comes a skeletal figure. And behind Richard is the Undead Hero. Here he lets out a chilling scream (a common trait of Richard's).



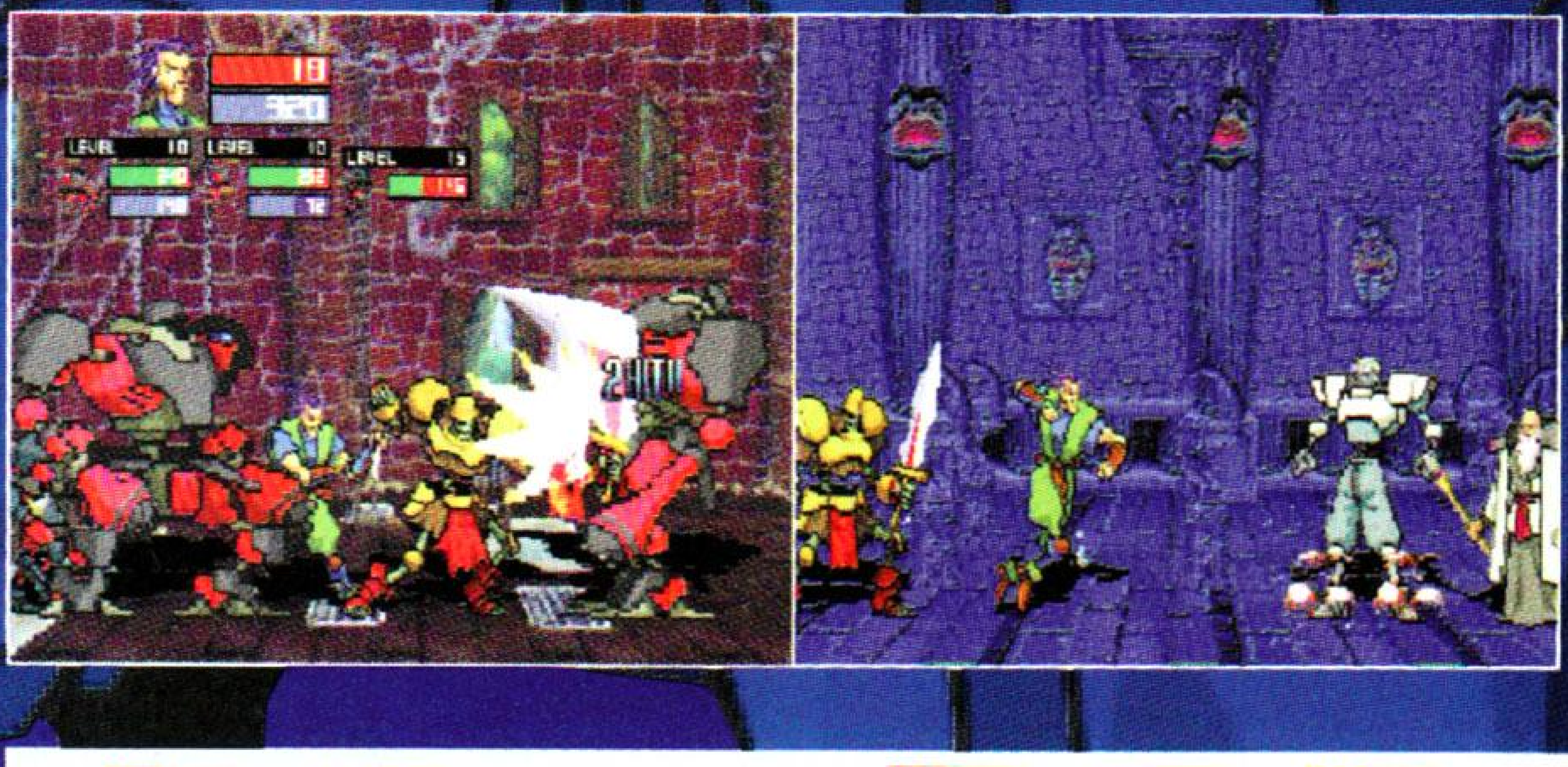


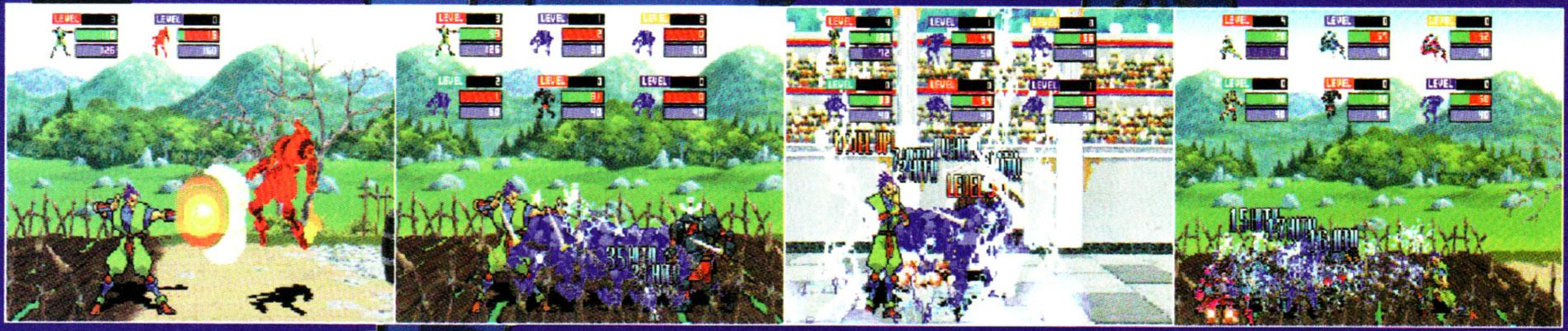
MULTIPLE ENDINGS INCLUDING ... THE ORIGINAL GUNSTAR HEROES BOSS!!

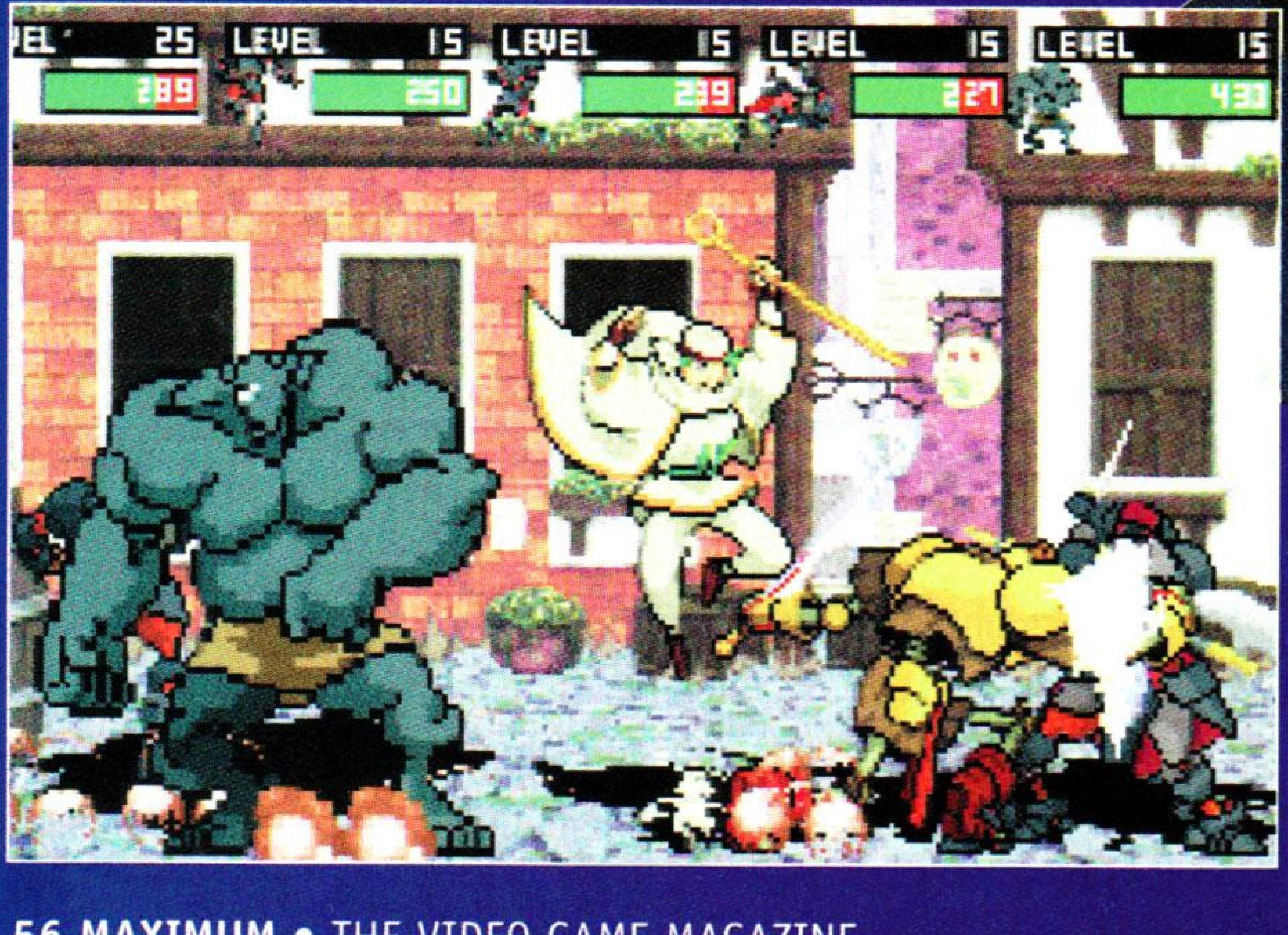


Level two continues the popular 'undead' theme. Zombie warriors rise from the ground to face our heroes. Things don't get any better once they're defeated. You get to face a massive cyclops whilst trapped in a magic menagerie. Even the enemies on this stage attempt to escape this beast.

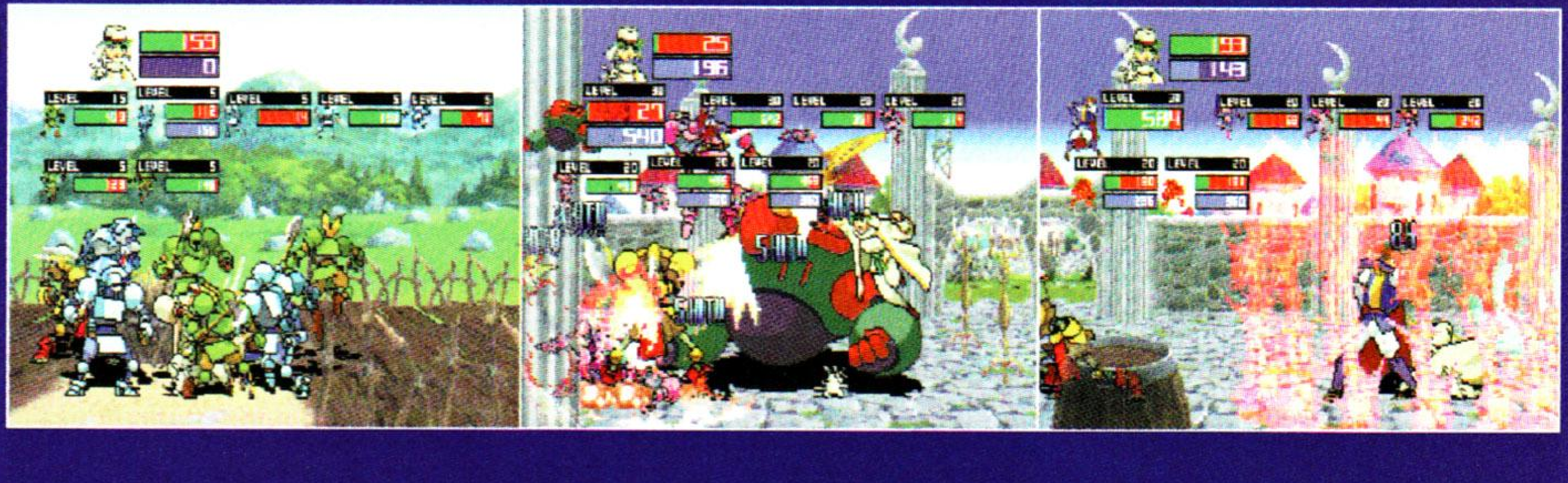
From level two you have three possible choices of direction. The first one takes you to the magician's guild, where they reveal their legion of Magic weapons. The second path takes you to a village where the people have found their ancient artifact has turned against them. The final path leads into the forest where a massive plant monster awaits.







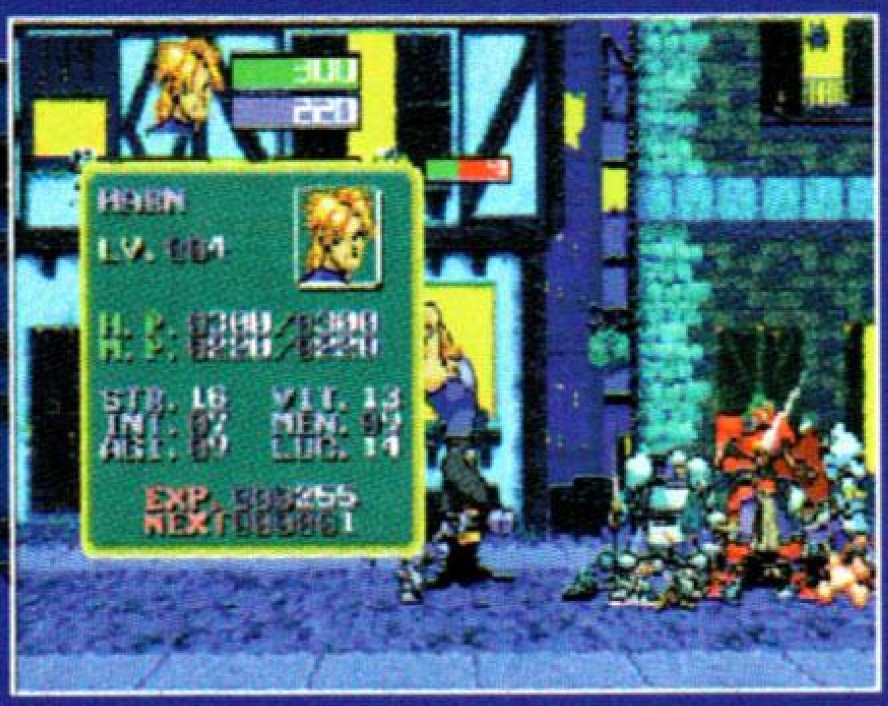
From here on in, the choice of paths grows further. A town riot, a country of prisoners, Harn's old friend Gasher, a village of cult victims, the mysterious Macho and his merry men, an ambush by mercenaries or even, a confrontation with the dreaded One-Armed Undead... possessor of the second legendary sword! Where to go to? The choice of course is yours.

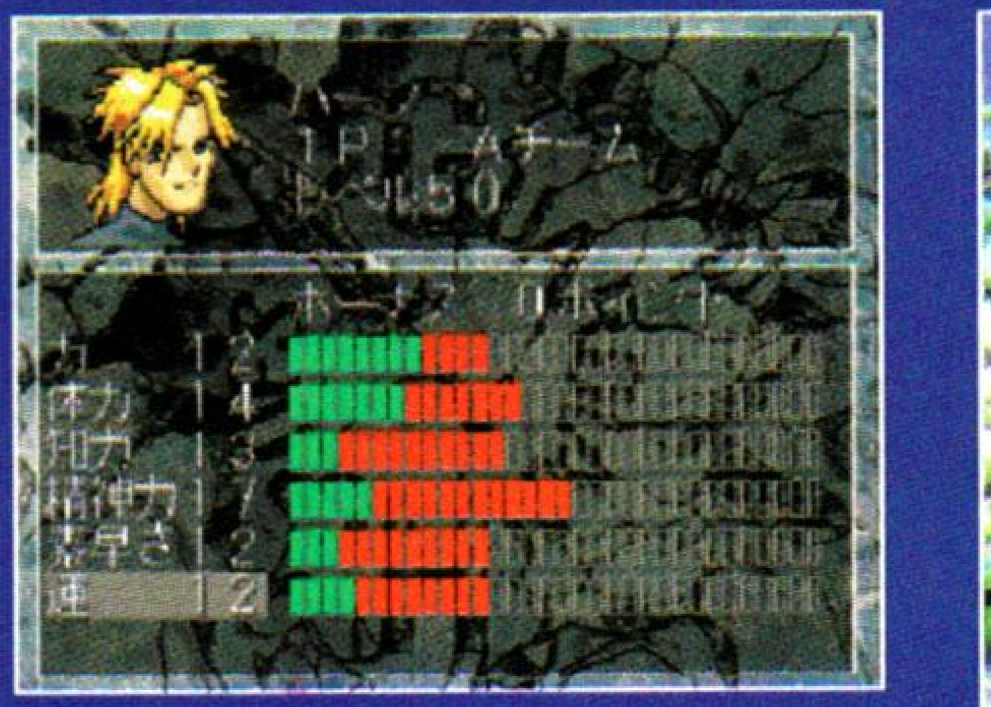


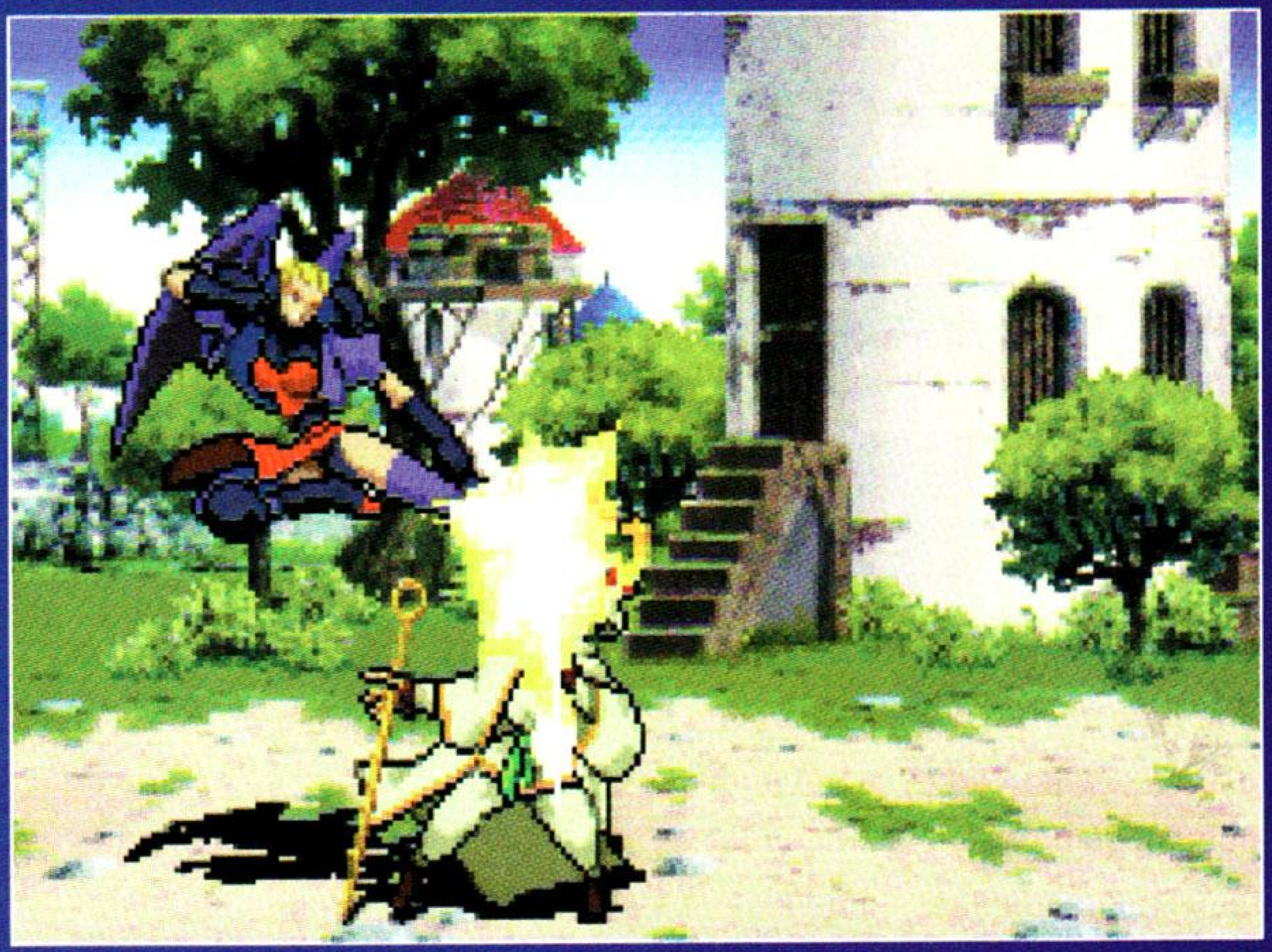
WITH EVERY HACK AND CHOP, SO YOUR POWER GROWS!

Guardian Heroes cleverly blends the character building elements of an RPG into the game, without hindering the pure beat 'em up nature of it. Each character has a number of attributes – strength, vitality, and the like – which we've shown next to each character profile. Pausing the game at any time brings up the character chart, showing these attributes together with what Experience Level the character is on and how many points they need to reach the next level. At the end of each stage, each new level gained becomes a point that can be added to one of the character attributes. The only way to get these experience points though, is by fighting and using magic. You don't need to worry about potions, amulets, lumps of meat or anything else. This is a fighting game after all!

Completing Story Mode once isn't too hard. But there are multiple endings with multiple bosses. And finding your way to each means exploring the different paths through the game. Can you find Super Zulu? The Earth Person? The Heavenly God? Or Golden Silver – the final boss from Treasure's original Megadrive smash, Gunstar Heroes?





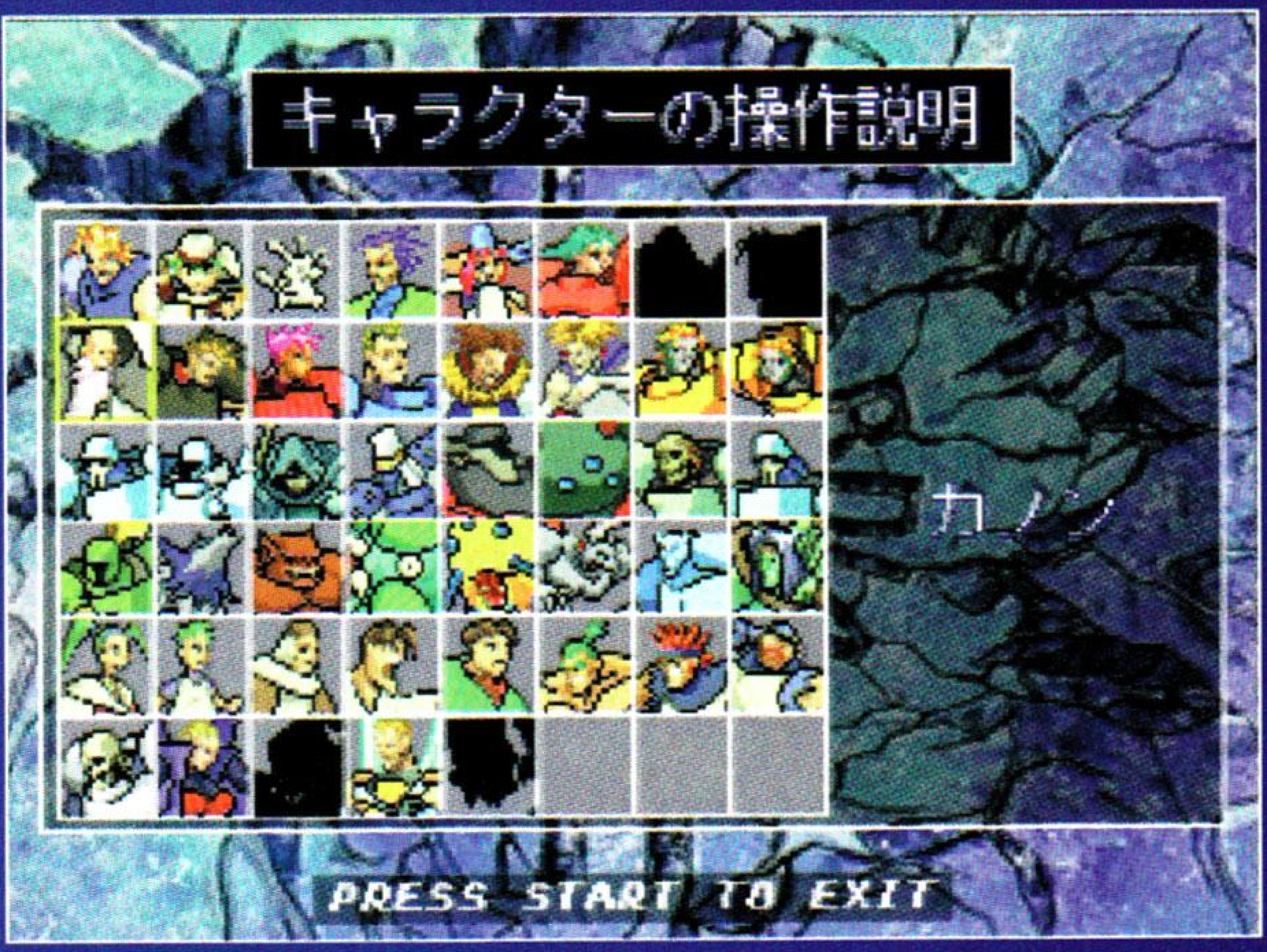


THE TRUE OBJECTIVE OF STORY MODE REVEALED... TO UNCOVER THE FULL 45 VERSUS MODE COMBATANTS!!

Yep, there's more to Story Mode than just finishing it and seeing all the endings. You have to find and defeat each of the 45 different varieties of enemy in the game. Why? So you can use them in the brilliant Guardian Heroes Versus Mode, that's why. Yes, Guardian Heroes features an excellent one-on-one battle game of its very own, that rivals any other versus beat 'em up you've played, just for its sheer over-the-top audacity! While at first it might seem pretty puny with its meagre starting selection of six fighters (the main five heroes and Ed the rabbit), Versus Mode soon picks up pace with each completion of Story Mode. Searching for new fighters to add to your Versus Character Selection Screen soon becomes the real quest. It's like collecting bubble gum cards or action figures or something, only you're collecting useable warriors for your beat 'em up.

CHOOSE FROM THE MIGHTIEST OF GODS TO THE TINIEST OF TODDLERS!

Each of the 45 acquirable characters has a range of moves relating to their status. And moves lists for each of the fighters can be brought up via the options screen. From here it's quite clear to tell which characters are the better ones, although the look of most of them reveals their strength. Rather than balancing out all the character's skills, Treasure have made each one only as good as you'd expect them to be. Select the massive flying robot-ball that is the Ancient Kingdom Magic Weapon and you can expect to hover about at leisure, sending sheets of crackling energy to the ground below. Pick Macho, the Hakkyoku fighting fist expert, and you can pull off more standard Street Fighter-style moves in your quest for victory. Pick a tiny Child Citizen and you can expect only to be able to perform puny diving attacks or little kicks. And naturally, you can't expect the likes of a Weak Citizen to defeat a Cyclops. Not unless he's in the hands of a master of **MAXIMUM** skill or greater (is there such a thing?). Surprisingly though, Edward M Cognac (Randy's rabbit) can match up to most opponents thanks simply to his awesome E-MAX homing fireball attack!

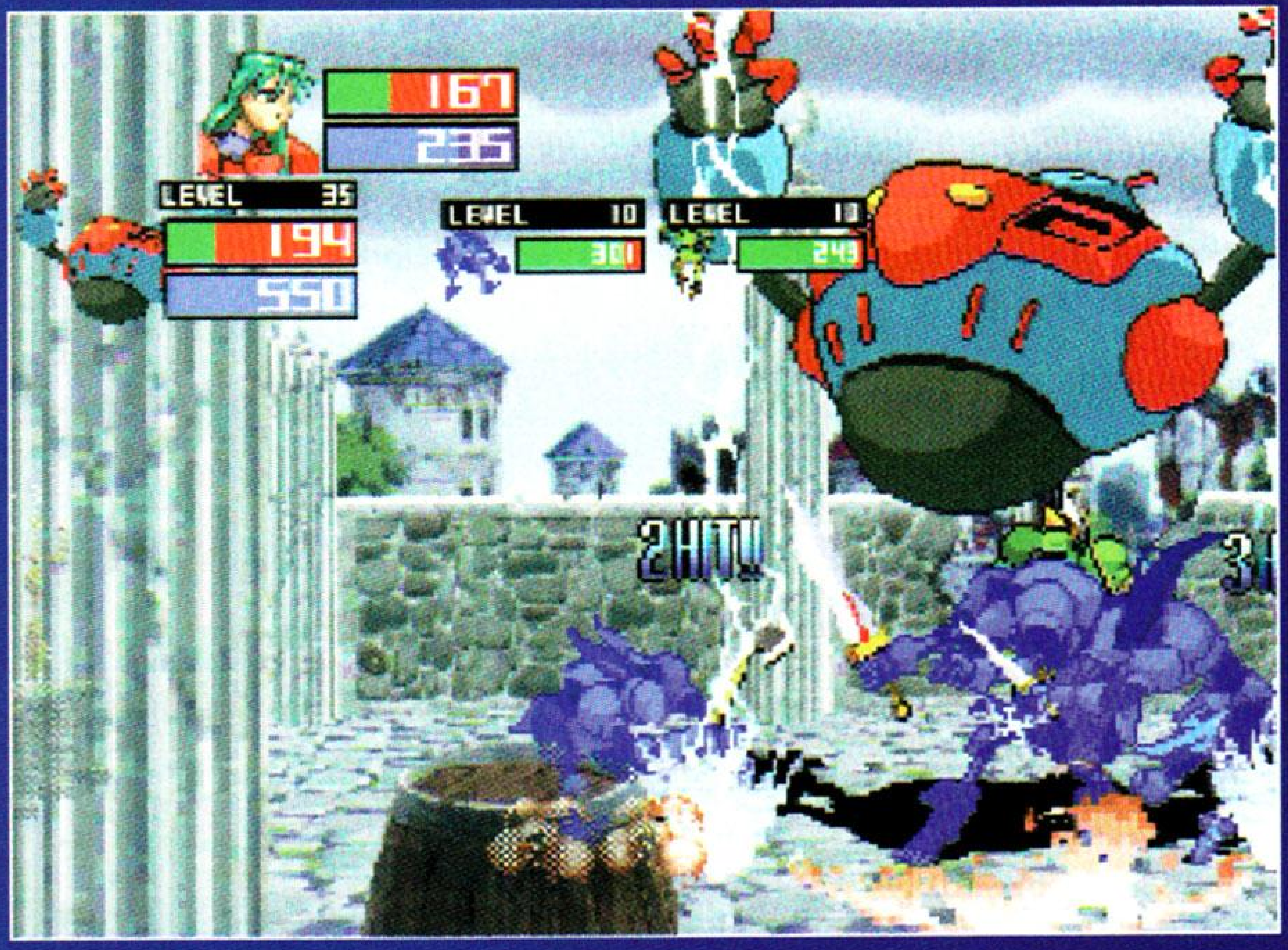


CAN YOU DISCOVER ALL 45 SELECTABLE CHARACTERS?

Notice how each character's energy bar has a miniature version of the character next to it? This mini-sprite is actually a shrunken version of the main sprite. It moves in exactly the same way too.

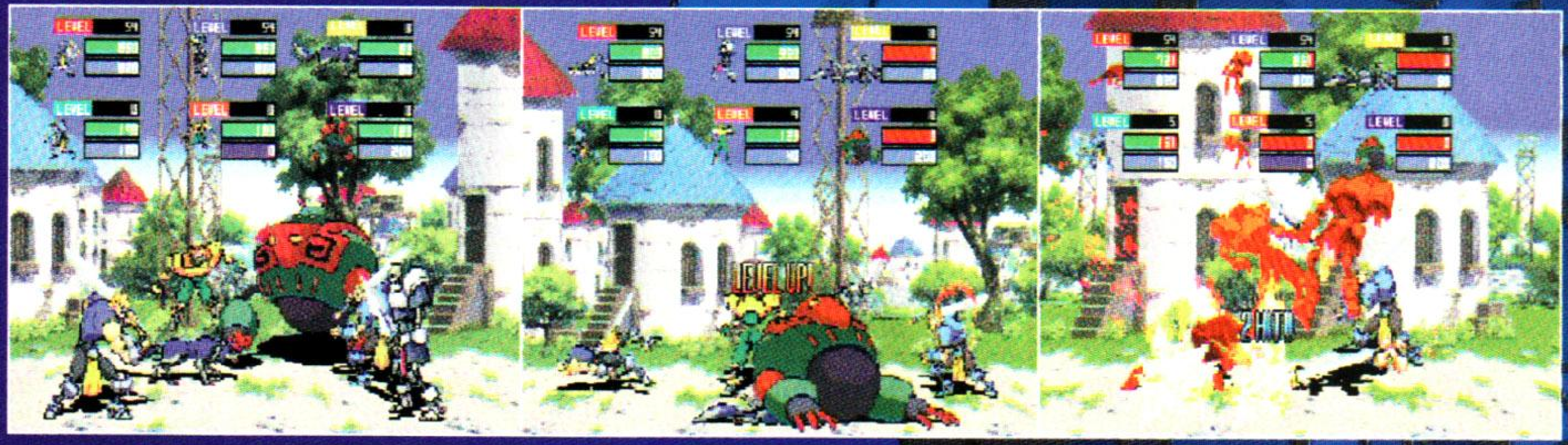
Versus Mode offers a variety of different battle modes. There's the normal 'last one standing wins' scenario. Alternatively you can battle for points within a certain time limit. Players can also up their Experience Level before rounds, to create ridiculously powerful fighting characters.

Each character has their own finishing pose and winning jibe when they are victorious. It's unlikely you'll see the one for the Elderly Citizen much.

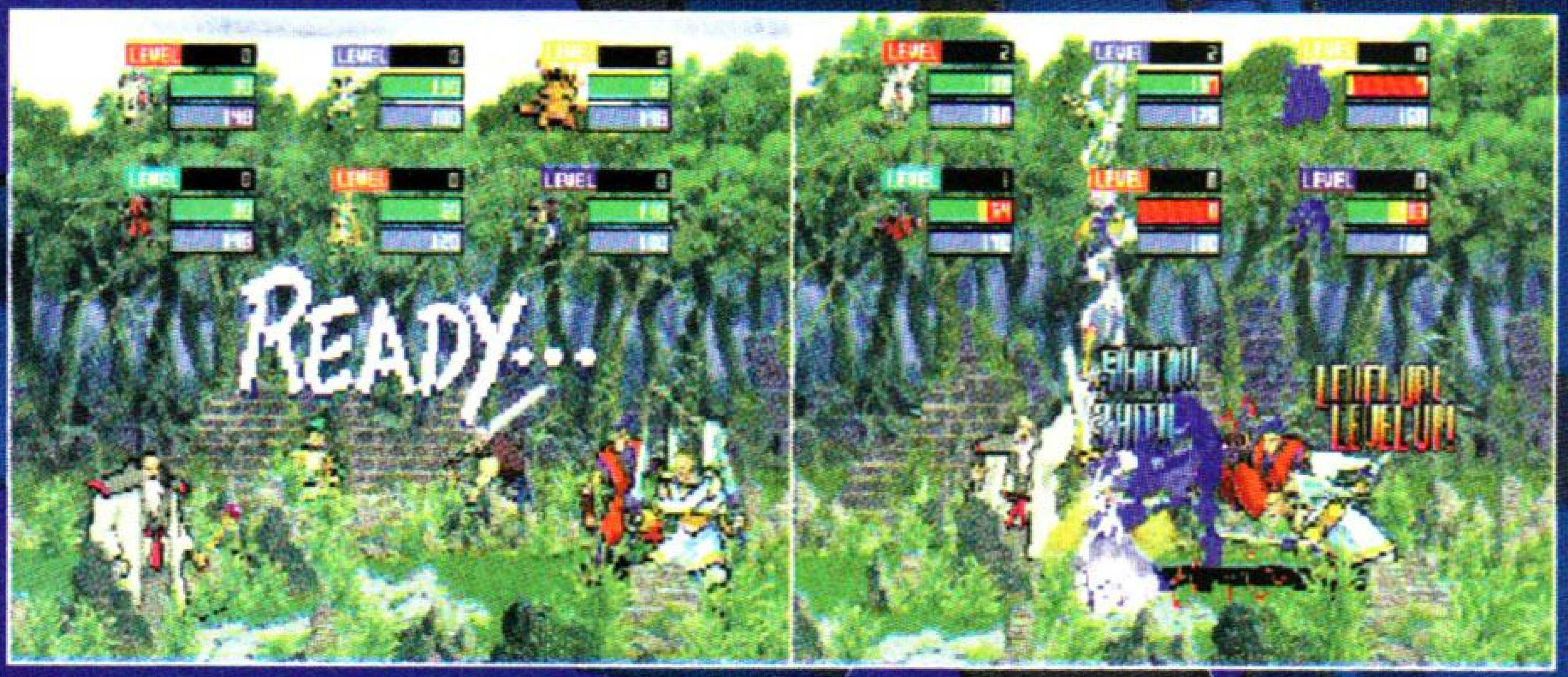


NEVER BEFORE HAVE SIX-PLAYERS VERSUS COMBAT BEEN WITNESSED!

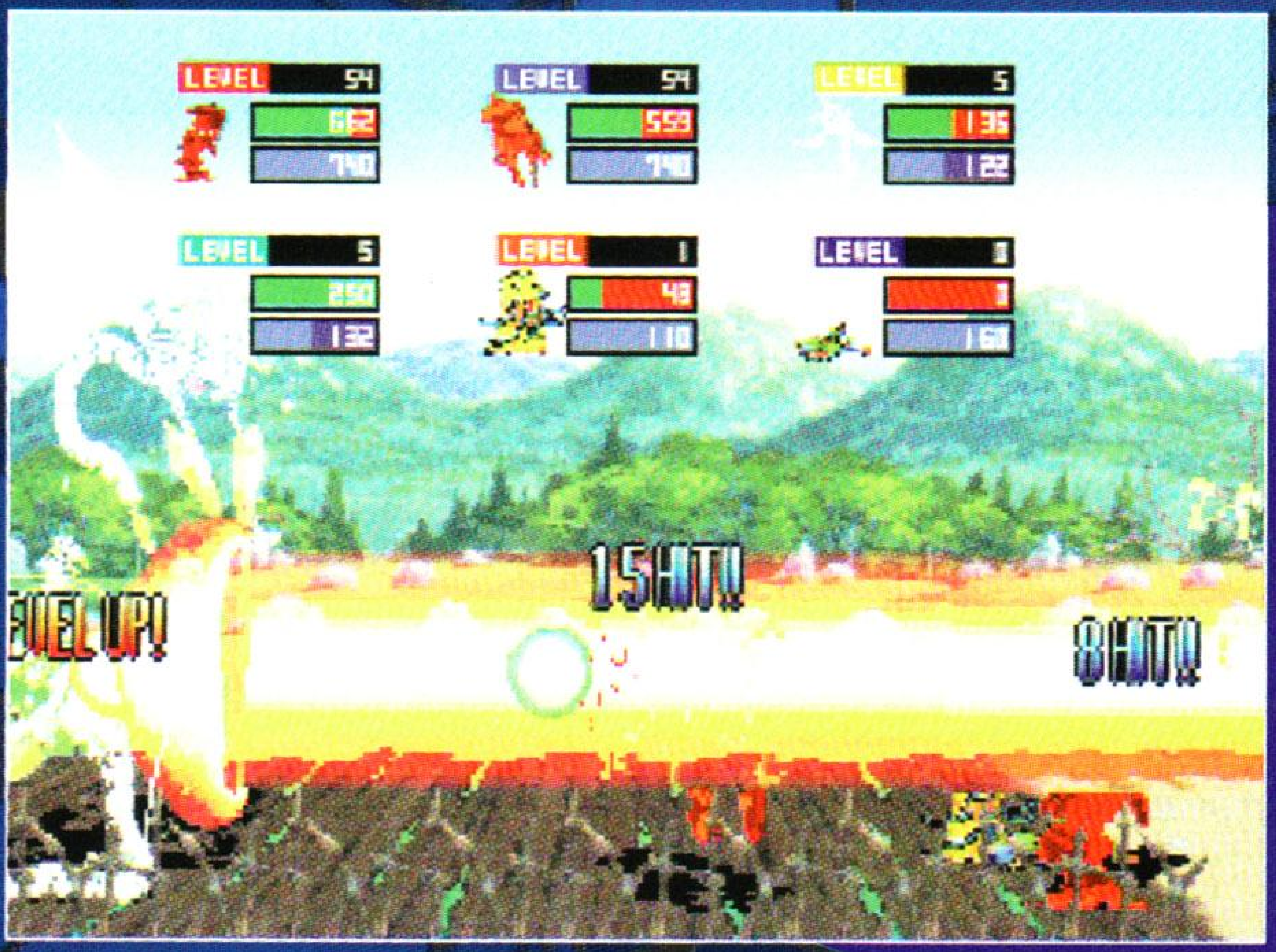
The outrageousness of Guardian Heroes' Versus Mode shenanigans doesn't stop at the mere '45 selectable characters' option. Treasure have pushed the concept of one-on-one fighting even further into the realms of the ludicrous by turning it into a one-on-five fighting. In other words, up to six players can battle away on-screen during any single fight. Set across almost all the backdrops from Story Mode (you can even run fully along them), together with the extra dimensions of the into-the-screen jumping, the playfield is simply huge. And it's amazingly impressive watching the screen zooming out to encompass the action as players launch wave-upon-wave of magical attacks on each other from all over the place.



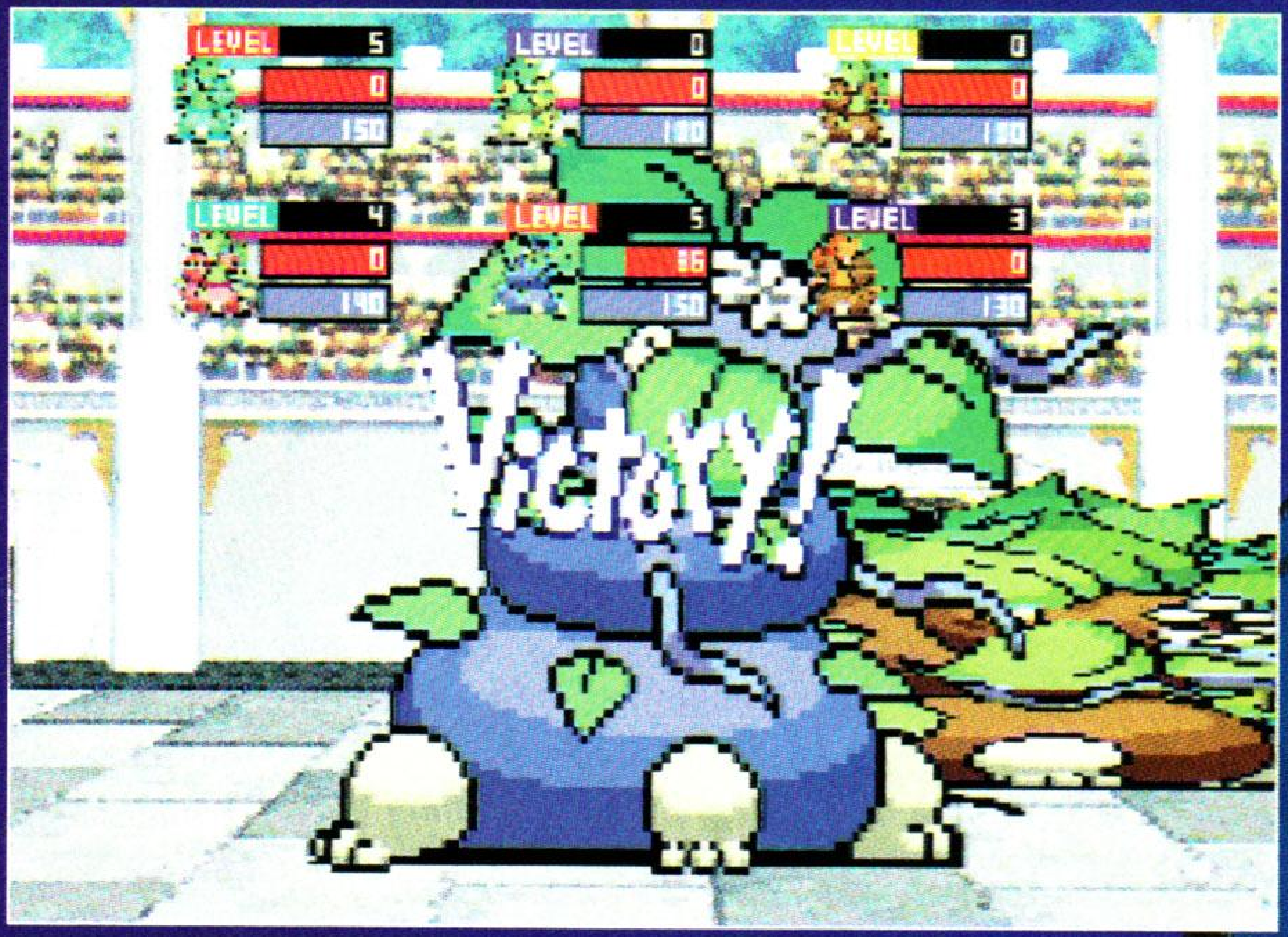
These shots are taken from the superlative simultaneous six-player Versus Mode battle! This provides a huge amount of enjoyment and when taking into account the vast roster of characters on offer, this game variation alone offers months of multi-player action! You can also choose your own backdrop from virtually any part of the main game, adding to the variety still further.



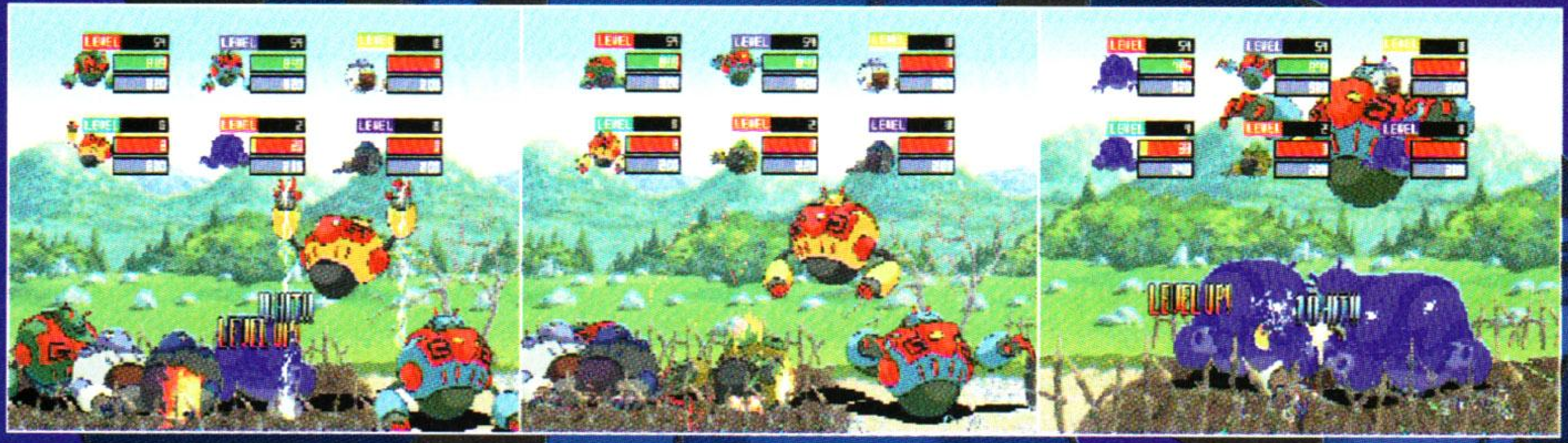
Making good use of the magical attacks in Guardian Heroes can make or break the Versus Mode player. Obviously the player below has done well with this particular strike, practically destroying two of his opponents with a 15 and 8-hit combination double-whammy! When you enter the realms of the 45 different characters, some of the fighters aren't quite as powerful as this...

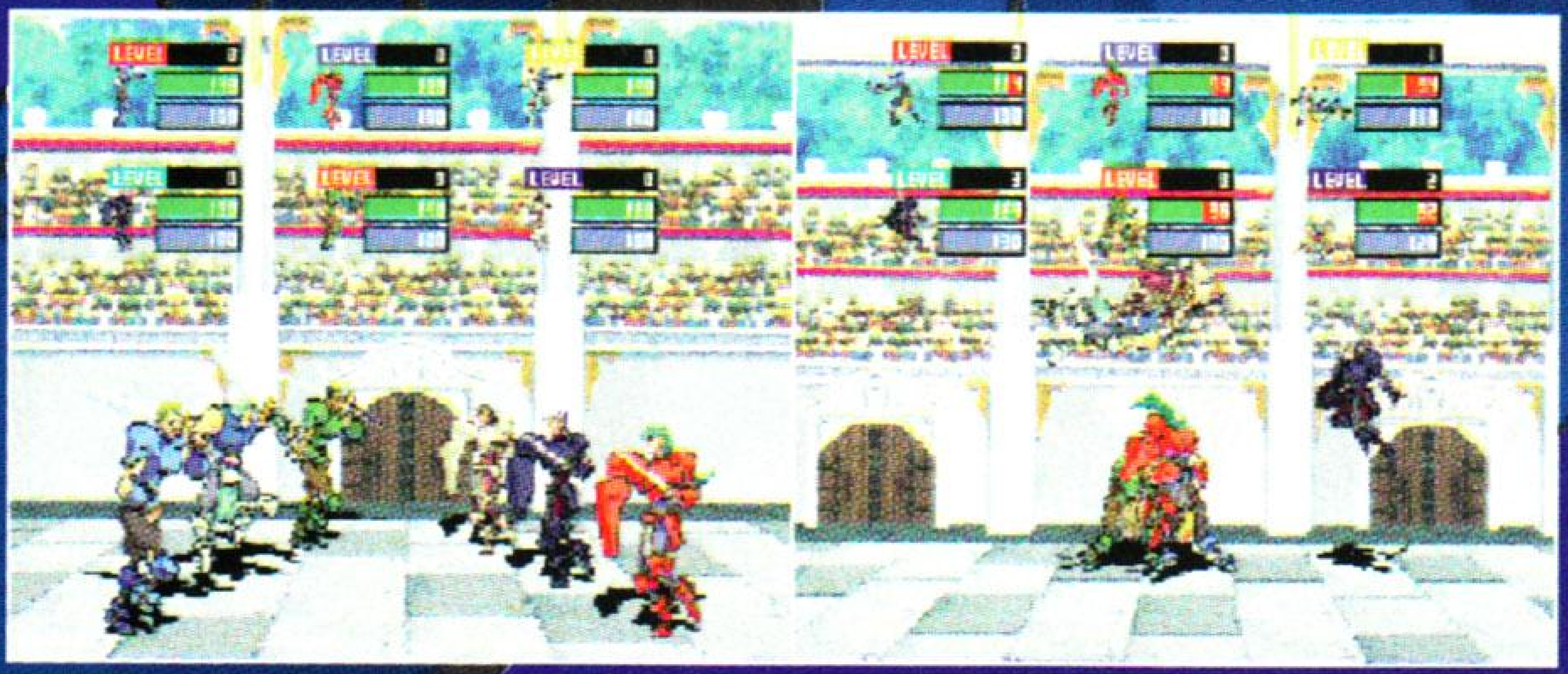


"BRING ME FRESH BRAIN-BOWLS! I MUST FEAST!" - HARN SAMUEL



Considering that the entire cast of Guardian Heroes can be selected once you've earned them (characters you get are stored in battery back-up memory), it's not surprising that some of them are infinitely more powerful than others. The creature above doesn't look as though it has many problems beating the living cack out of the opposition...





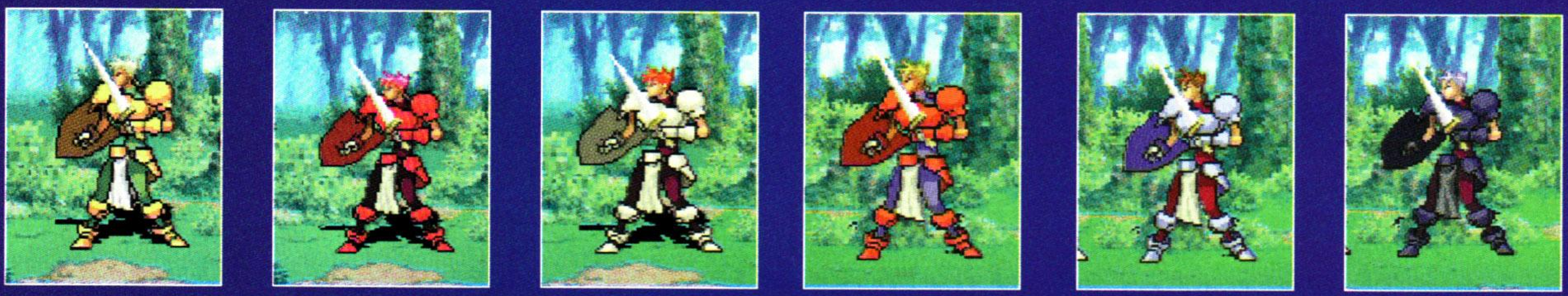
These shots show the different locations available in the Versus Mode and also demonstrate the multiple colour schemes open to players in this particular game variation.

MULTIPLE COLOUR SCHEMES FOR EACH CHARACTER!

To give any player a chance, when facing an opponent who may have selected a ridiculously powerful fighter such as the Heavenly God (more ridiculous you're unlikely to ever find), the Guardian Heroes Versus Mode allows all the players to select the same character if they wish. What's more, there are six different costume colours for each character, so you need never get your lumbering puce Goblin confused within anyone else's lime or tan Goblins. Just imagine – incredible six-player multi-coloured Heavenly God fights with screen-high horizontal energy beams being unleashed everywhere! You can have oversized Ancient Kingdom Magic Weapon battles or super-miniature Edward M Cognac six-pack slapfests. The possibilities, once again, are endless!

FACTS AND FIGURES FOR FIGHT FANATICS!

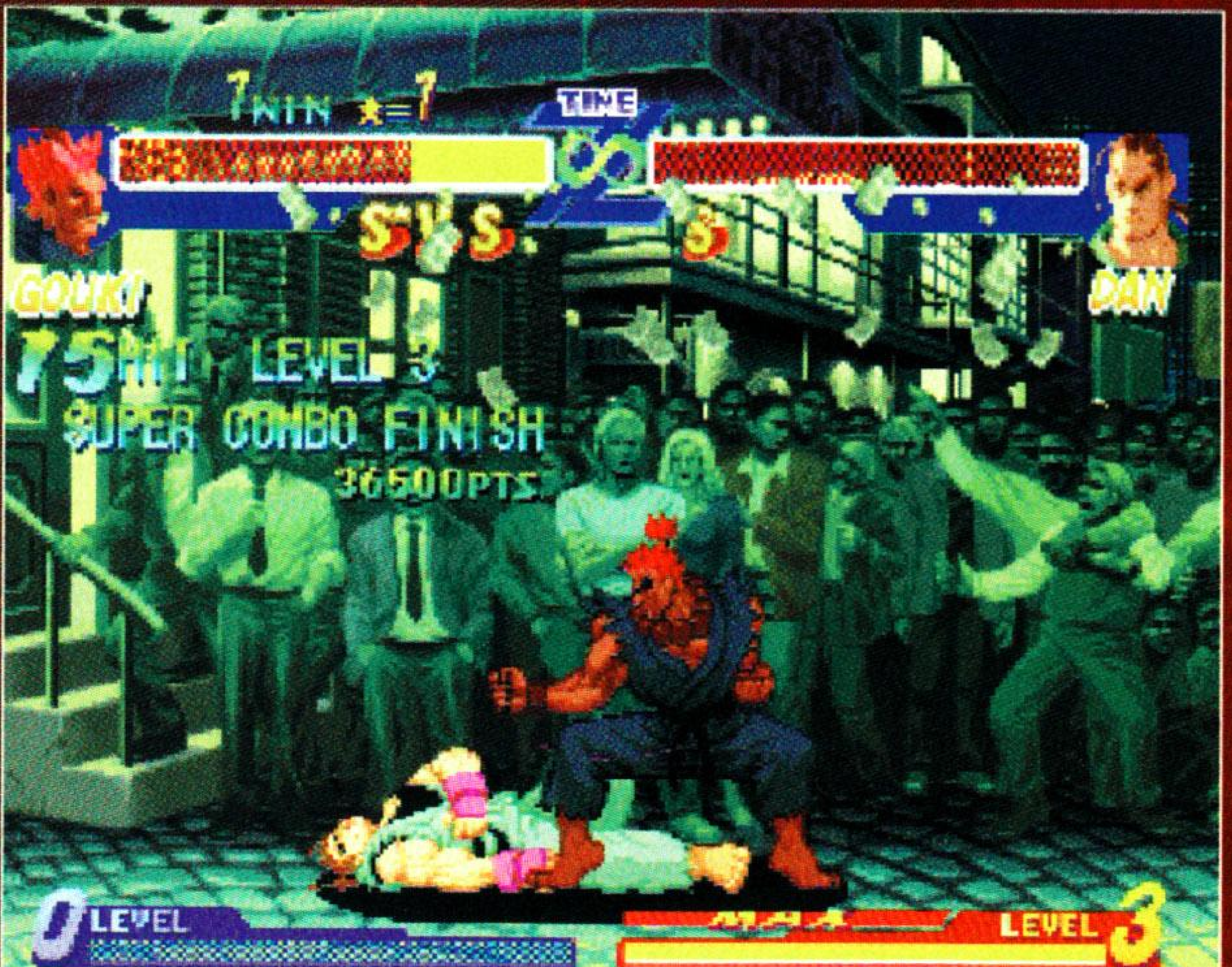
Treasure took the art of statistics to ridiculous extremes with Megadrive release Alien Soldier, when they gave you a record of every factor in the fight from the time it took, to the energy lost. Guardian Heroes doesn't go to this extreme - however you can check certain records on previous fights. Permanently stored in memory are complete records of how many fights each different in-game character has played and won. What's more, players can even save files under their own name, recording all their own personal winning records for future perusal. Essential stuff for egotistical Guardian Heroes players - eager to prove to the world that they are, yes, "The Master"!



The selectable colour schemes in action. Choose your favourite battle fatigues before doing battle with the other denizens of Guardian Heroes!

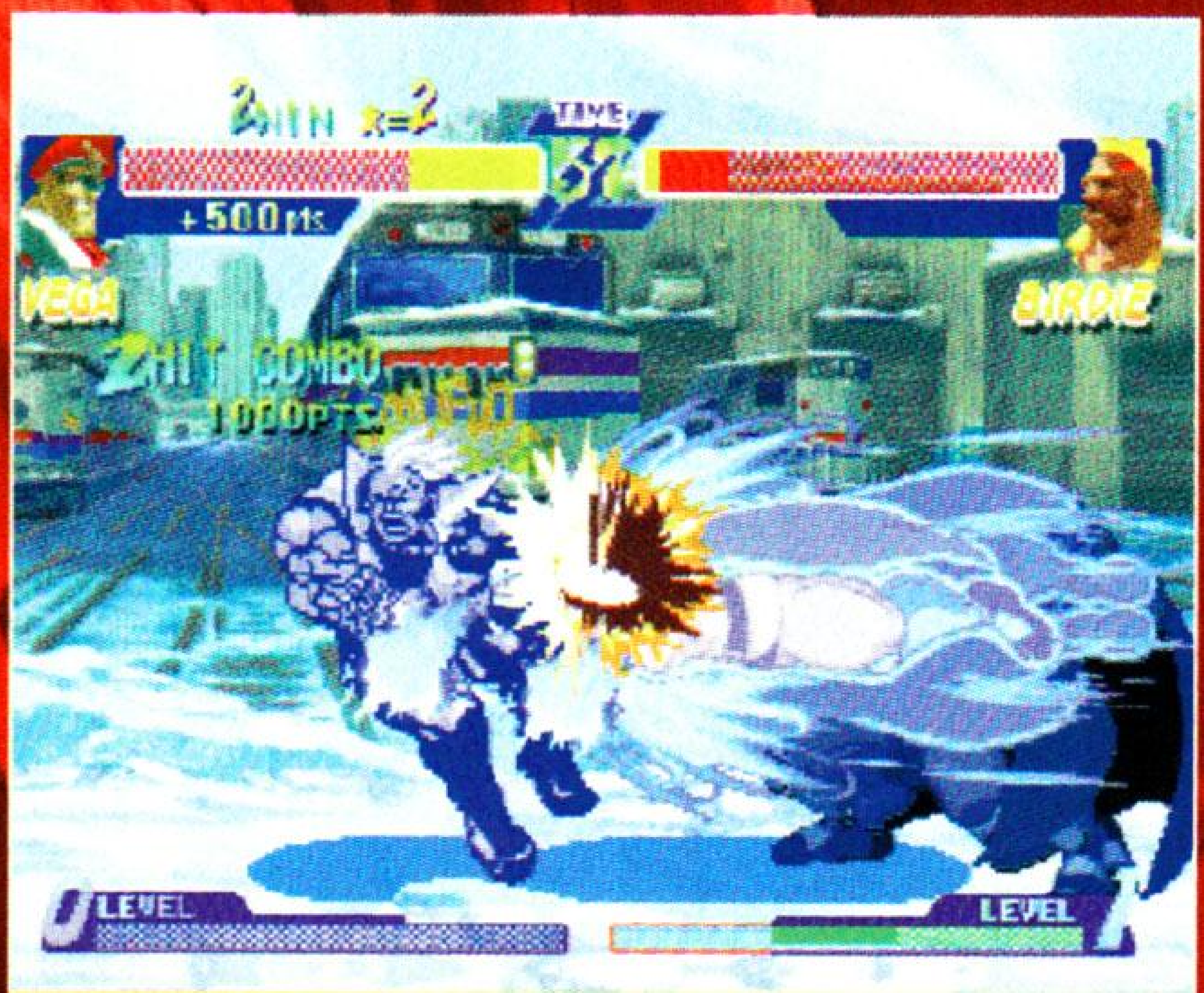
COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES
A CUT ABOVE THE REST!
AND A HACK... AND A SLASH...
Guardian Heroes
ISSUE 172 OUT NOW!

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA sets upon home owners! Unleash the awesome power of the Super-Combo!



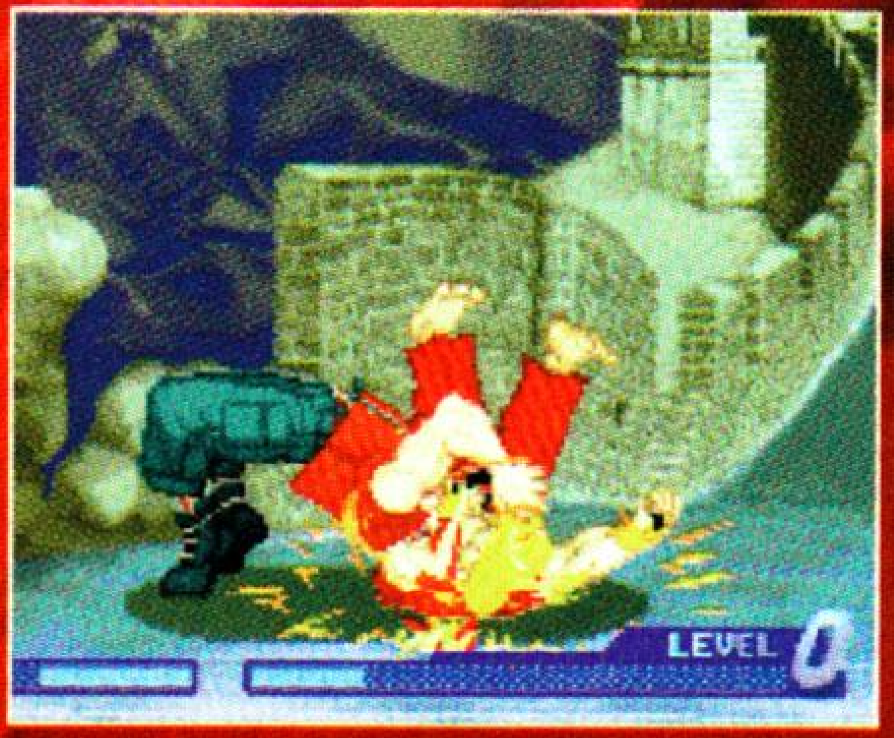
In 1991 Capcom revolutionised the one-on-one beat 'em up genre as we know it, with a sequel to their earlier unsuccessful attempt, Street Fighter. Replacing the gimmicky pressure sensitive pads of the original with six buttons for more precise control, Street Fighter 2 : The World Warrior contained an unprecedented level of depth for a beat 'em up, setting a new standard in both presentation and innovational gameplay. Over the past five years Capcom have developed and expanded the Street Fighter formula through five different sequels, adding new features and refining certain elements until the series evolved into the game that you see before you: Street Fighter Alpha: Warriors' Dreams.

The action in Street Fighter Alpha takes place chronologically in between the original Street Fighter game and Street Fighter 2 - a sort of Street Fighter 1 1/2 - explaining the presence of characters like Birdie and Adon from the original game, and the youthful appearance of the Street Fighter regulars (though how M Bison, portrayed here as a muscle bound behemoth, managed to get so small by Street Fighter 2 is a mystery to us). Inspiration for both characters, backgrounds and music are also taken from Capcom's seminal side-scrolling fisticuff-fest Final Fight, with Guy and level two boss Sodom both making their debut a one-on-one beat 'em up.



STREET FIGHTER ALPHA COMES TO THE HOME CONSOLES INTACT!

As regular **MAXIMUM**readers will know, the Street Fighter Alpha coin-op contains many features new to the Street Fighter series. New characters, new dynamic anime style artwork, chunkier sounds, a helpful beginner mode, Alpha Counters, the awesome two player Dramatic Battle versus M Bison, character specific taunts, and best of all, a revised Super Combo system that allows for some seriously spectacular finishes! PlayStation owners will be happy to know that ALL of these features are present and correct in the PlayStation translation, along with a few new options EXCLUSIVE to the home version! Fight fans rejoice!



Throws have been a part of the Street Fighter formula since day one and they return in Street Fighter Alpha. Since the days of Street Fighter 2, throws have been considered most cheesy and this remains the case with Alpha.

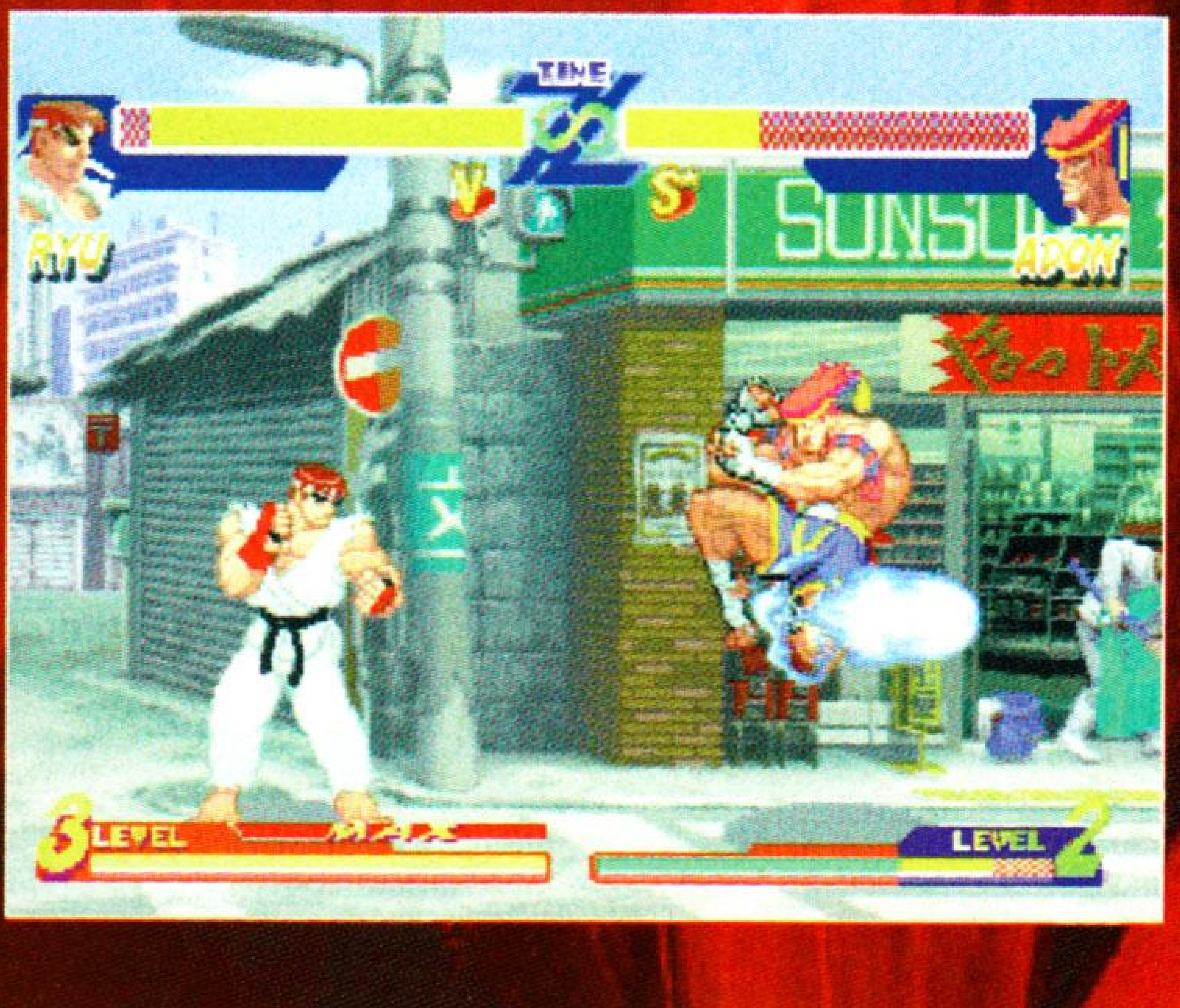
EXTRA OPTIONS IN HOME GAME

As is the tradition with Street Fighter home conversions, Street Fighter Alpha contains an extensive options screen allowing the player to tailor all aspects of the game, from the fight speed to the button configuration. These options can then be saved to a memory card and loaded with the game to save time. A special mention must go to the addition of a brilliant three in one button option, which allows a single button to act as if all three punch or kick strengths are pressed simultaneously. During play the button then responds as a light strength kick or punch, but can be used at any time to perform easy level three Super Combos!

PlayStation and Saturn owners also have the option to play the game in one of several different modes, specifically designed to take advantage of the home environment. First, there is Arcade Mode, an exact translation of the coin-op with all the special endings and hidden characters of the original (though slightly different means are required to summon them). Secondly, two players can indulge in a spot of Versus Mode action for non-stop one-on-one beatings with the resulting stats recorded for posterity. Thirdly, beginners and experts alike will benefit from the Training Mode, a brilliant invention that provides infinite time and an invincible dummy character upon whom you can practice combos and the like. Finally, providing you have the skill to access it, the Dramatic Battle option allows two players to take on M Bison in an awesome two on one fight to the death that has to be seen to be believed! Street Fighting nirvana!

A NEW BREED OF STREET FIGHTER!

Street Fighter Alpha is the most beginner friendly Street Fighter yet. On top of the Beginner mode which allows for automatic blocking and instant two button super-combos, the artificial intelligence of the CPU controlled characters is a lot fairer than in previous Street Fighter games. Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo still ranks as the toughest Street Fighter game on the market, but there the computer flaunted its uncanny ability to respond directly to your joystick commands before your character had even performed the move! In Street Fighter Alpha the computer behaves much more like a human opponent, attacking more and blocking less, resulting in a far more offensive playing style. This, combined with features like aerial blocking and Super Combos, encourages a more offensive style from the player too, resulting in much more enjoyable and explosive bouts all round!



BIRDIE
LEVEL

ACCESS THE HIDDEN FIGHTERS

The methods for selecting Akuma, M Bison and Dan as player-controlled characters has changed slightly from the arcade. Listed below are the correct methods for selecting these three awesome fighting machines. On the player select screen move to the Random Player Select box (the question mark) and enter the following codes.

DAN
Player 1 Side: Hold L2 & R2, then press Triangle, Circle, X, Square and finally Triangle again.
Player 2 Side: Same as player 1 side.

M BISON
Player 1 side: Hold down L2 then press L, L, D, D, L, D, D, jab & fierce.
Player 2 side: Hold down R2 then press R, R, D, D, R, D, D, short & roundhouse

AKUMA
Player 1 side: Hold down L2 then press L, L, L, D, D,D, jab & fierce.
Player 2 side: Hold down R2 then press R, R, R, D, D,D, short & roundhouse.
Once a character has been selected, you can access him again easily by moving to the random character select box and pressing DOWN.

SATURN OWNERS!

The codes to access the bosses are identical to the PlayStation version featured above, only you need to press the left and right shoulder buttons instead of the appropriate L2 or R2 buttons.

DAN
Hold left and right shoulder buttons then tap Y, X, A, B, Y or Y, B, A, X, Y for his pink costume.

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA
WARRIORS' DREAMS

DEFINITIVE TRAINING SCHEME!

So what if you've never actually played a Street Fighter game before? Or, heaven forbid, any fighting game at all? What if you're new to the videogames market, own a PlayStation, like the look of Street Fighter Alpha but couldn't tell a chain from a combo. Well fear not, for **MAXIMUM** is at hand. Continuing our unprecedented Street Fighter Alpha coverage, over the next few pages we'll be telling you EXACTLY how to play Street Fighter Alpha, from the first time you pick up a pad to the finer points of total mastery.

As you can see, the action remains nigh-on identical to the coin-op. This shows just how proficient Capcom are with their conversions.

ATTAIN THE RANK OF MASTER!

Mastering Street Fighter Alpha is no easy task, even if you've had experience of past Street Fighter games. The Super Combos, overhead attacks and Alpha Counters add a new twist to the gameplay, meaning that Street Fighter regulars will need to go back a few steps and relearn the basics if they want to compete with the best. Over the next few pages **MAXIMUM** tells you all about these new features and how to use them to deadly effect.

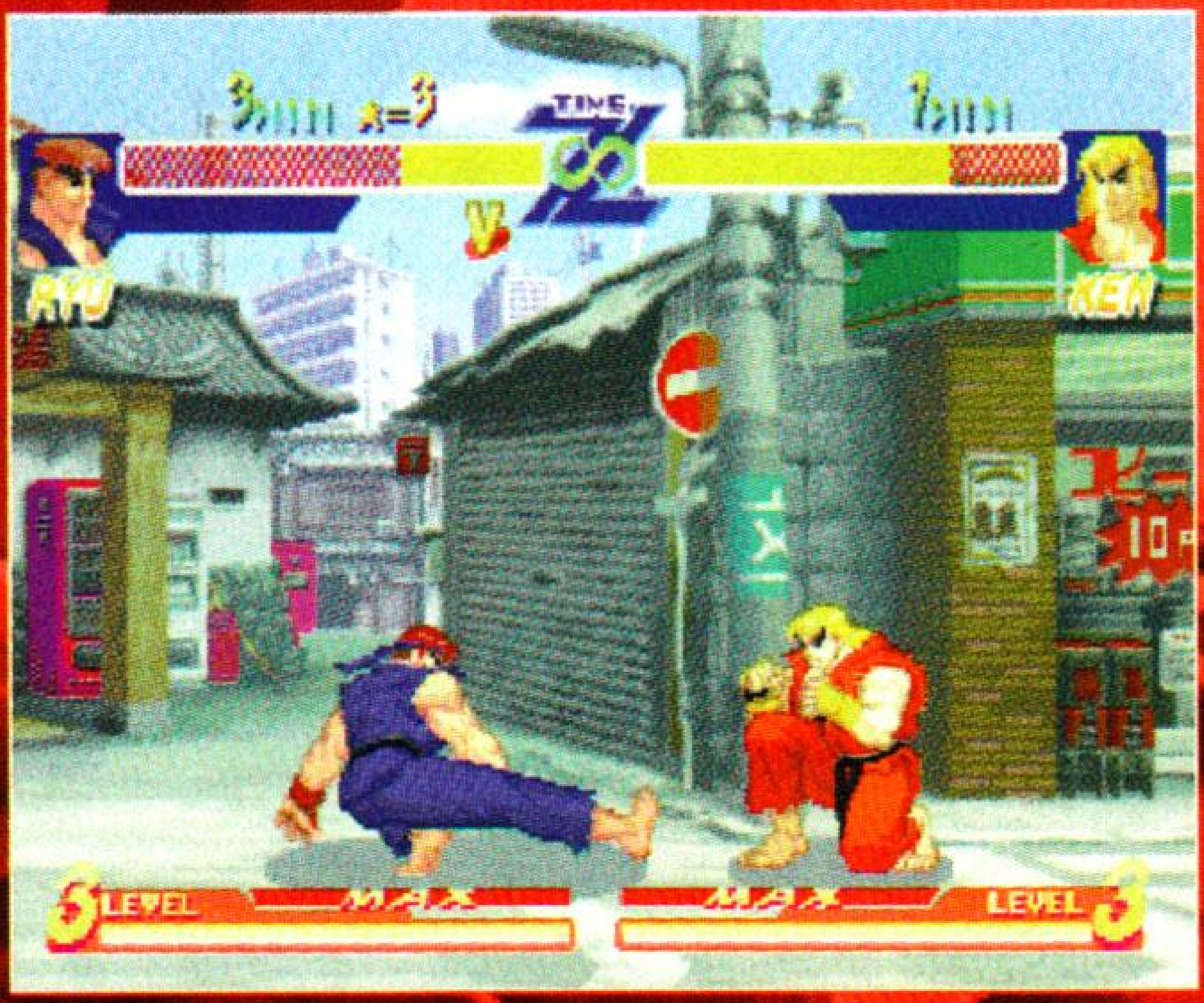
TIME
RYU KEN
HIT COMBO
1300PTS
VEGA
REVERSAL
LEVEL

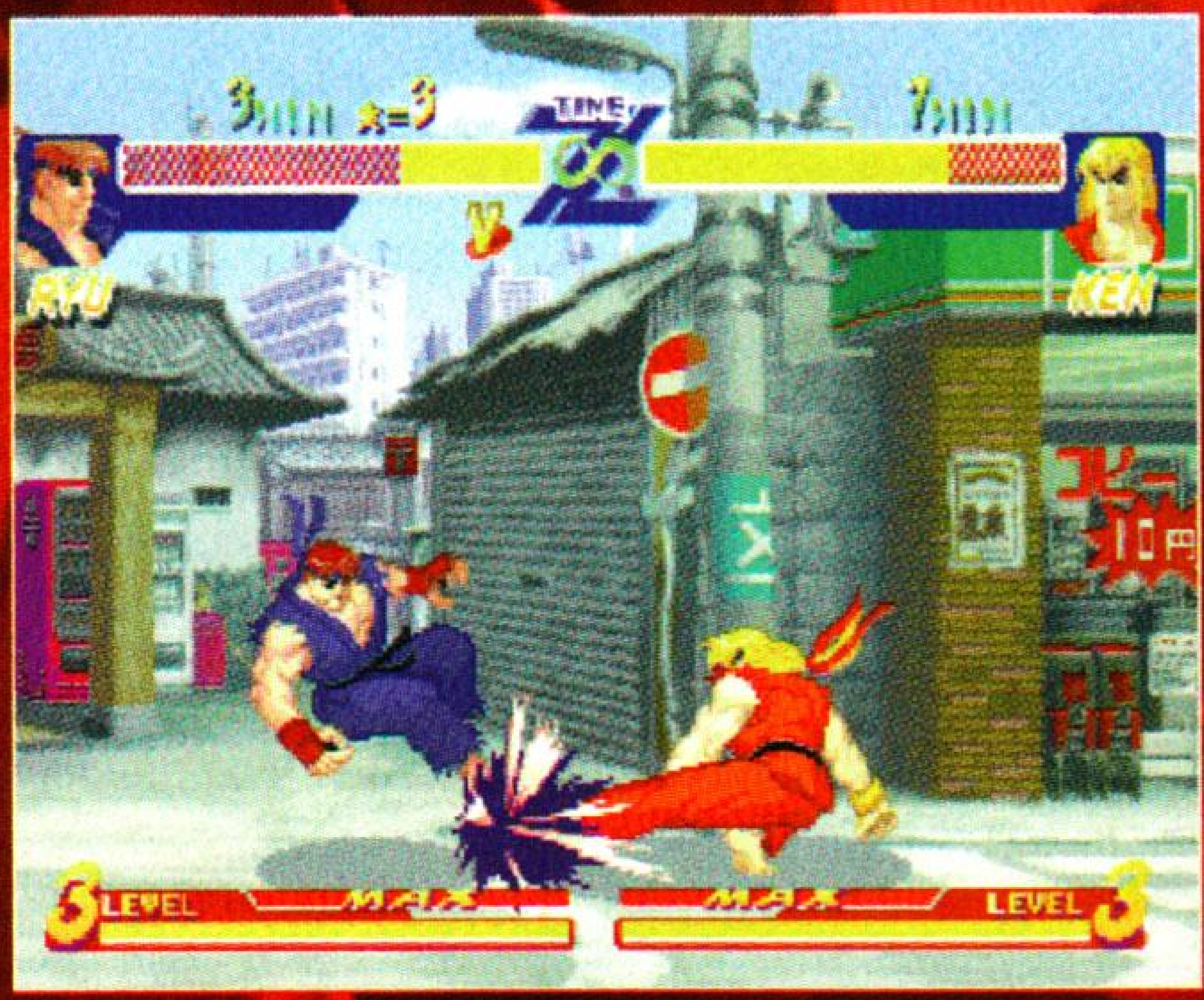
GETTING STARTED

So you've got the game running. The manual, with all the moves, is open in front of you. You've entered training mode, picked you're character and the stage is loaded. Your character flexes on-screen awaiting your command. A rather placid looking enemy sprite stands opposite you, motionless and ready to absorb abuse. What to do?

MOVEMENT

Street Fighter Alpha follows the same basic movement principles of all the Street Fighter series, not to mention 99% of all other beat 'em ups. The directional completely pad controls your characters movement. Pressing the pad toward will make your fighter move towards your opponent (ie forwards). Away will make him move back. Pressing the pad either down, down-toward, or down-away, will result in your character crouching down low. Pressing the pad up will make your character jump straight up. Pressing up-toward or up-away will make them jump diagonally either towards or away from the opposition. Practice jumping over your opponents head to land just on the other side of him. Learn to gauge the distance of your character's jump. If you press an attack button as you jump, you will perform a jumping attack.





Having missed with a fierce sweep, Ryu is immediately vulnerable to a return kick from Ken. This is because the recovery time on a powerful hit is very long indeed. It's basic techniques like this that you need to master before moving on to better things.

PUNCHES AND KICKS

As you are doubtless already aware, there are three different punch and kick strengths. (See the legend for the correct terminology). The basic equation to remember here is that, the harder strength the hit, the more damage it does, but the slower it is. Harder hits also tend to have a larger range. So why not always use hard hits? Because if you miss, or the hit is blocked, the delay time before you recover and can move/attack again is greater than with light hits, giving your opponent more time to get in a counter move. The strength of the hit is directly proportional to the recovery time.

BASIC OFFENSIVE TECHNIQUES

1. THROWS AND HOLDS

A throw is a move that results in your character actually laying hands (or indeed legs) on your opponent and then chucking them across the screen for big damage. A hold is a move where your character grabs an opponent and then repeatedly pounds them in some suitably painful fashion. Although specific to each character, the technique to perform a throw is basically standard. When near an opponent (ie. your shadows touch) just press either towards or away (depending on which direction you want to throw) and either fierce or roundhouse. The same principle applies for holds. Once you have a character in a hold repeatedly wiggle the pad and tap all the buttons to increase the speed and thus the amount of hits the attack will do. Alternatively, if you are caught in a hold wiggle the pad and tap all buttons to break free as quickly as possible. Throws and holds are best used on opponents who have missed with an attack and are vulnerable for a brief second, but be warned, throws can be countered in Street Fighter Alpha.

2. SPECIAL MOVES

'Special moves' are moves that require a specific combination of joypad movements and button presses to activate a 'special' attack that will inflict damage on your opponent even if blocked. These often take the form of a projectile attack, but can result in anything from a throw to a counter.There are two types of special move in the world of Street Fighter Alpha: charged moves and instantly summoned moves. Most characters tend to use either one technique or the other, though some (eg. Birdie) use a mixture of both. Instant moves normally require a semi-circular or circular joypad movement followed by a button press, while charge moves require you to 'charge' the pad in a specific direction

LEGEND

Just in case you were wondering, here is a full description of all the abbreviated terminology used in this extended play.

Toward or T - Press the pad horizontally in the direction of your opponent.

Away or A - Push the pad horizontally in the opposite direction of your opponent.

Short, Forward and Roundhouse - correct terms for light, medium and heavy kick.

Jab, Strong, Fierce - correct terms for light, medium and heavy punch.

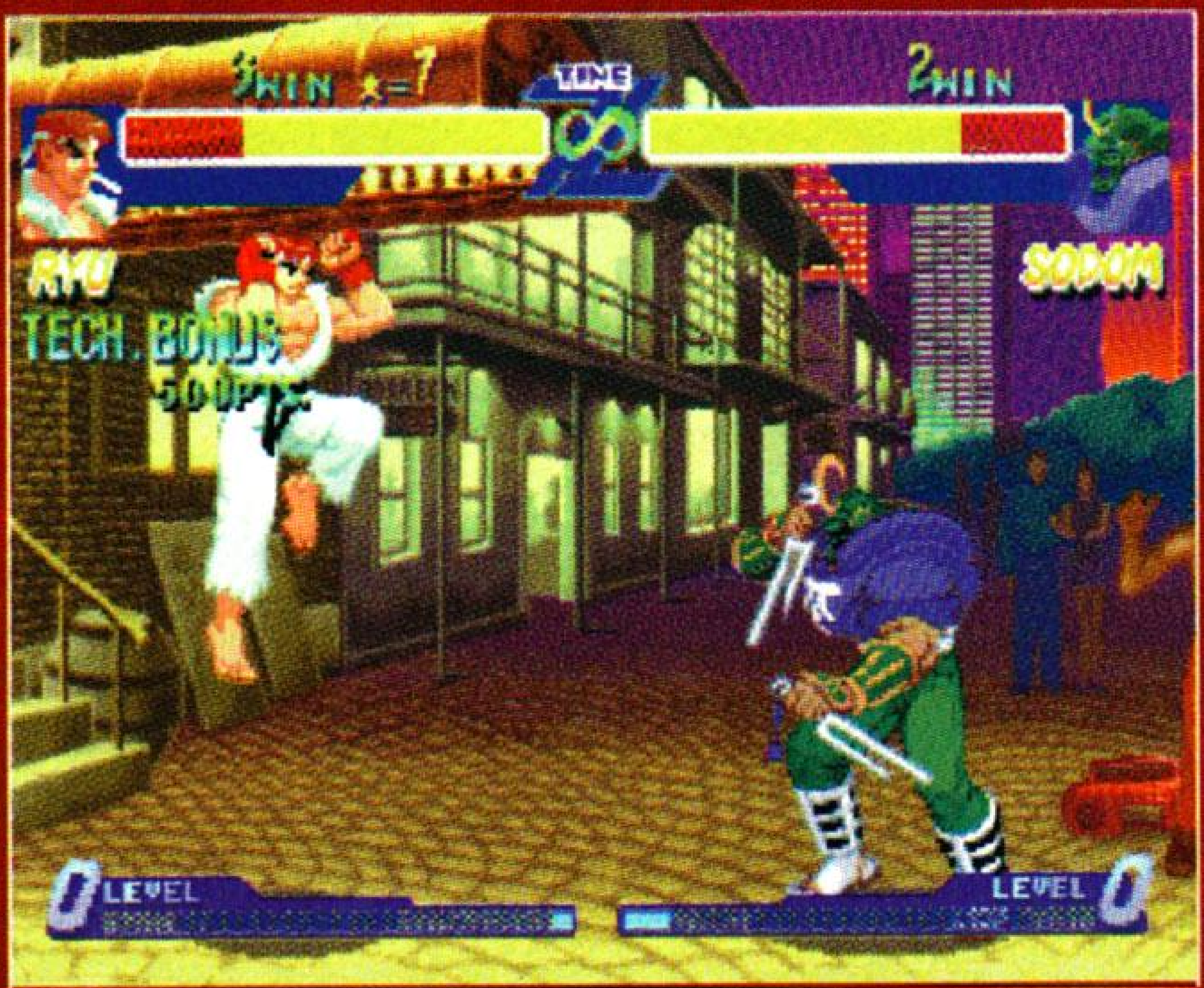
CPU - Computer controlled opponent.

Down or D - Down on the pad.

Up or U - Up on the pad.

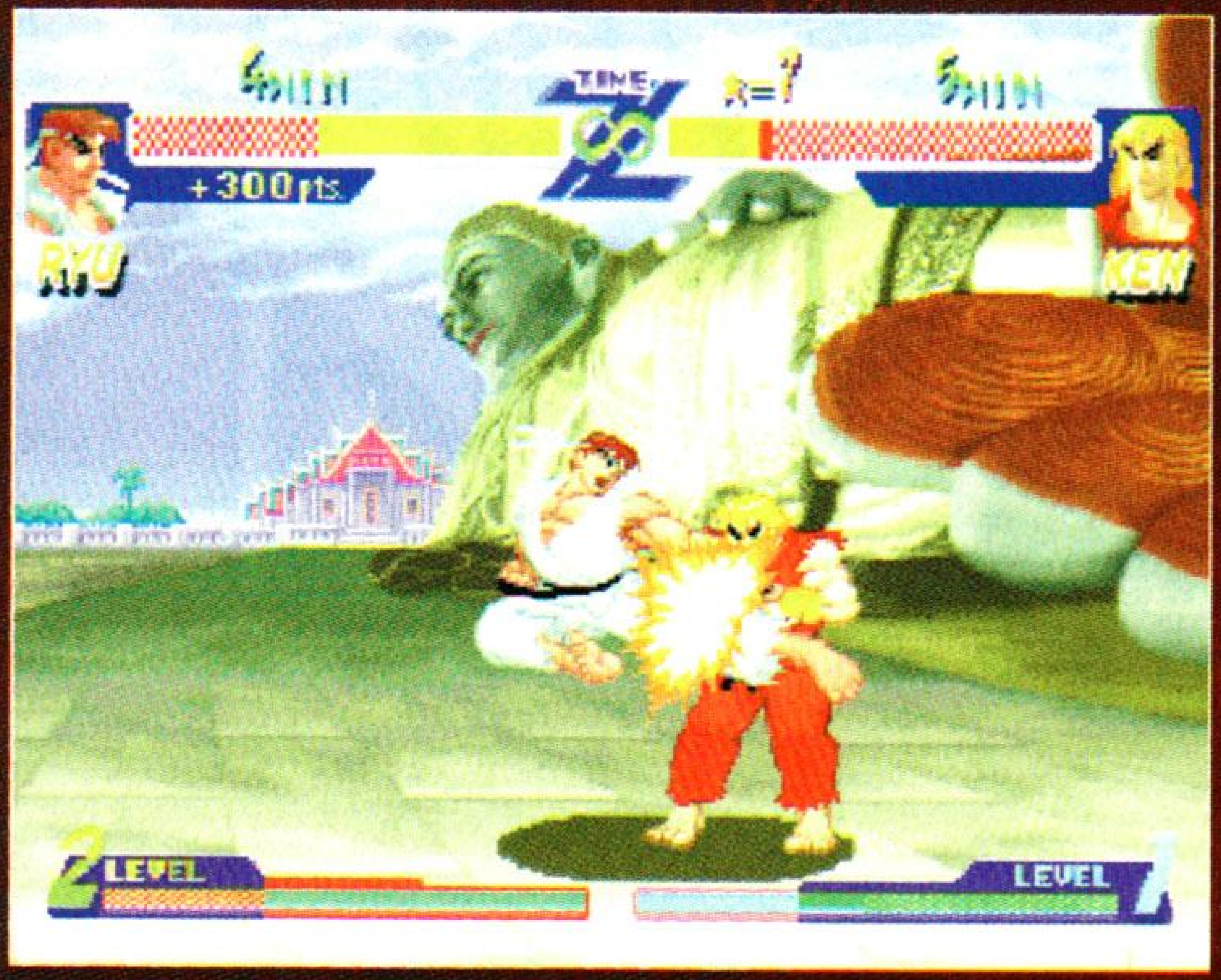
Down-Toward - Directions that are hyphenated are diagonals.

Technical bonuses are awarded for getting out of throws. Like Virtua Fighter 2, you need to perform a throw motion near-simultaneously with your opponent in order to get out of the attack.



TIME
+1000PTS
KEN
BIRDIE
LEVEL

THE GREATEST STREETFIGHTER YET ARRIVES ON CONSOLE!



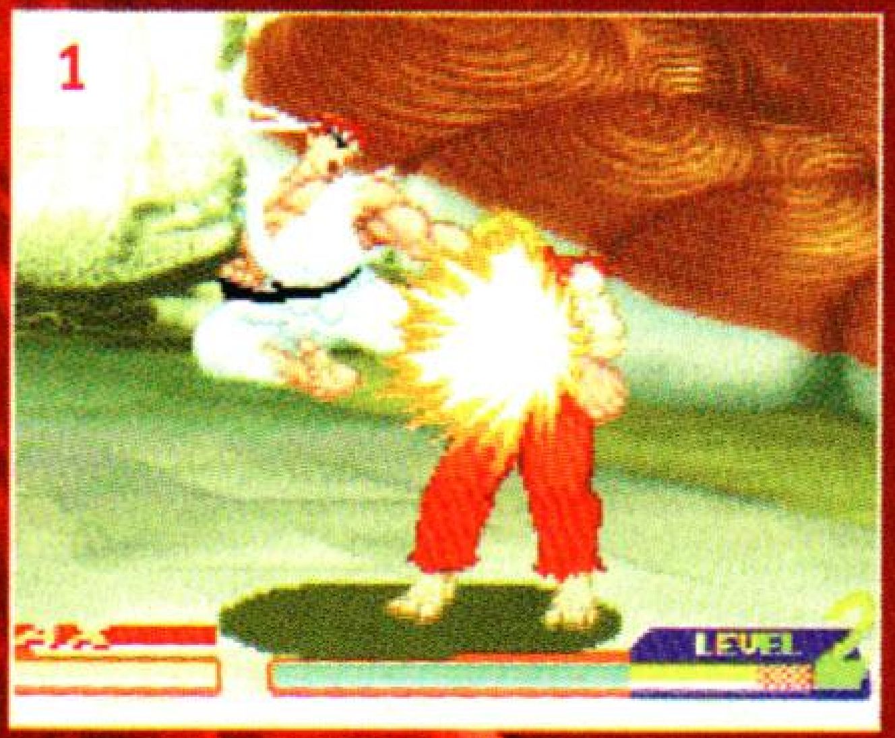
Mastering deep hits are the key to executing thebest combination attacks. Here, Ryu is performing a text book rendition of this particular technique.

for a brief period of time before performing the move. Special moves have been made even easier in Street Fighter Alpha, with the computer allowing for a wider margin of error in the execution of these techniques. Consult your manual for a complete list of each character's special moves. The key thing to remember about performing special moves is that the button press must come AS you reach the last direction on the control pad, not before or after. Ryu's fireball, for example, is down, down-toward,toward AND punch at the same time.

3. CONTACT POINTS

There are several contact points on an opponents body depending on how you are attacking. If you are attacking from the ground then you can hit your opponent in either the head, torso or feet. If you are attacking from an aerial strike (eg. a flying kick) then you can aim for either the head, neck or chest. The chest is also referred to as a DEEP hit, as it is the lowest possible strike area and enables an easy follow up for a aerial/ground combo.

1



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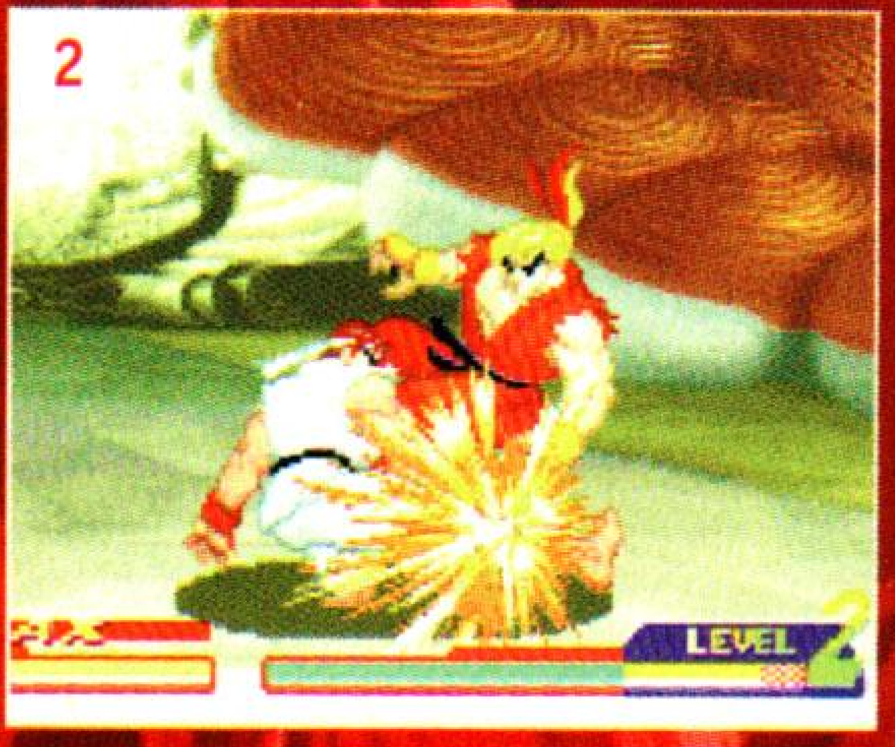


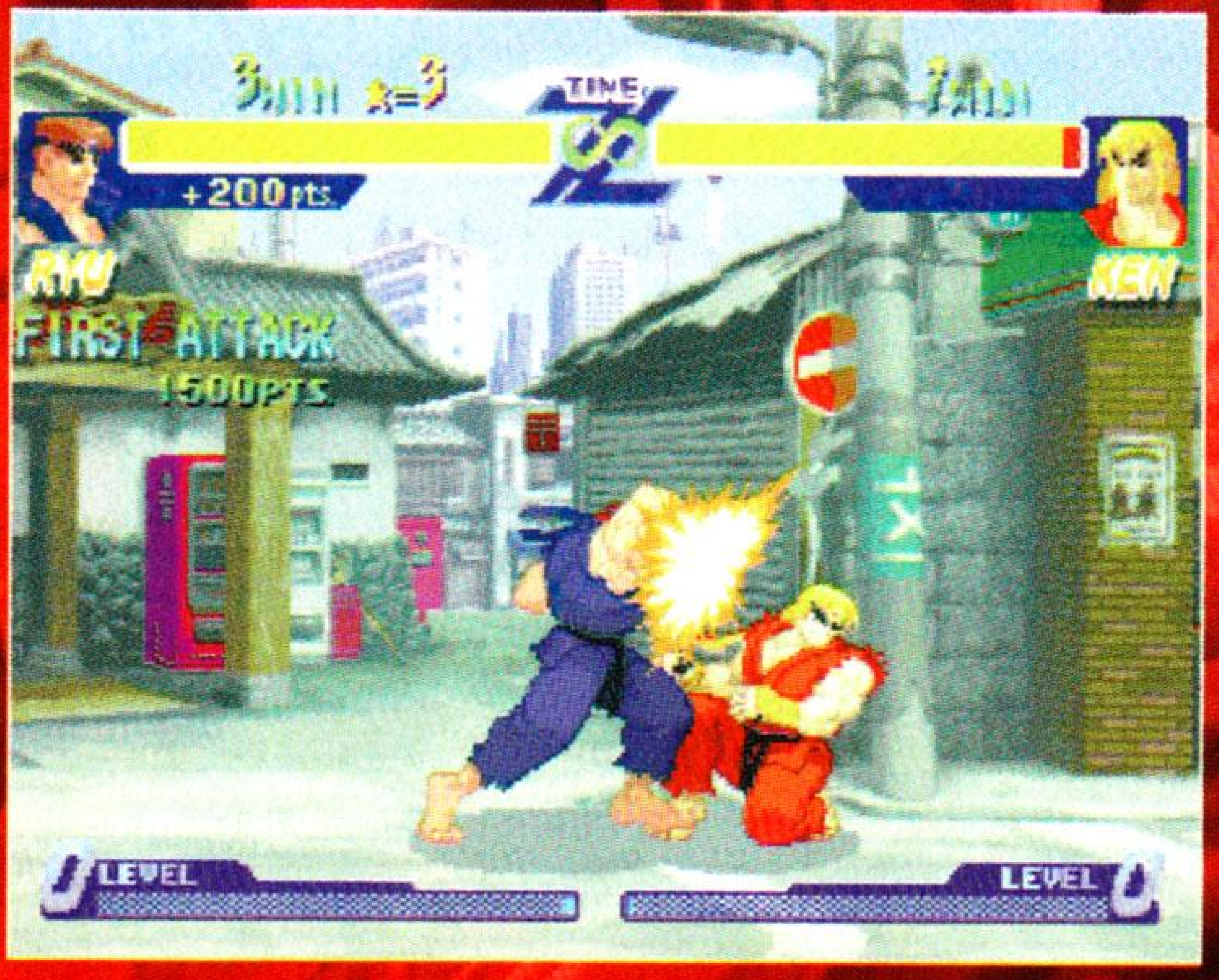
4. THE AERIAL/GROUND ATTACK COMBO

When jumping towards an opponent using an aerial attack it is possible to follow up the hit with an unblockable second the moment you land. In order to achieve this it is important to gauge the distance of your jump and the timing of the initial aerial strike. As mentioned above, the ideal contact area for a follow up move is the chest, known in the trade as a deep hit. If you hit any higher the opponent will have time block or even counter the second strike. A good basic air/ground combo is a flying roundhouse to crouching roundhouse sweep. If this connects it will not only do two hits but trip the opponent up, placing the flow of the fight on your side. This is an example of a basic two hit combo.

BASIC DEFENSIVE TECHNIQUES

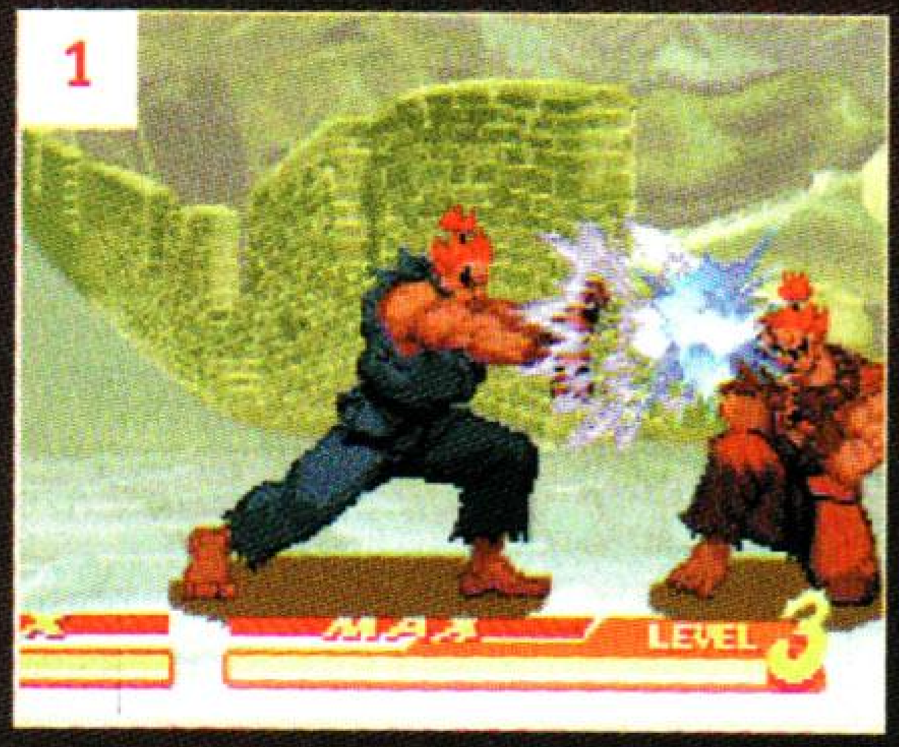
1. BLOCKING

Blocking is the most important technique for beginners to master. It protects the player from damage from all normal attacks and seriously reduces the damage inflicted by special attacks. There are three kinds of block in Street Fighter Alpha: the high block, the crouching block and the aerial block. The high block is a standing block, and is achieved by simply pushing away. It is used to block any jumping or standing attacks your opponent should make. If your opponent is not attacking you, your character will walk backwards, but the moment he strikes, your character will put up his guard and block the attack. A successful block is marked with a blue circle at the point of contact. The crouching block is achieved by pressing down-away. It is used to block most standing attacks and any crouching or sliding attacks also. Note that the crouching blocks will defend against 90% of all attacks made by an opponent who is on the ground, however new 'overhead' moves have been introduced which clear your low block and strike down, acting as an aerial attack even though they are performed on the ground. You don't really need to worry about these right now but it's important to bear them in mind. We will deal with aerial blocking in the intermediate section.



The overhead strike in action. Ryu is performing an excellent punch to the face against Ken, who has adopted the usual crouch-block stance. This stance worked a treat in previous SF games, but the overhead attacks put paid to that in Street Fighter Alpha.

1



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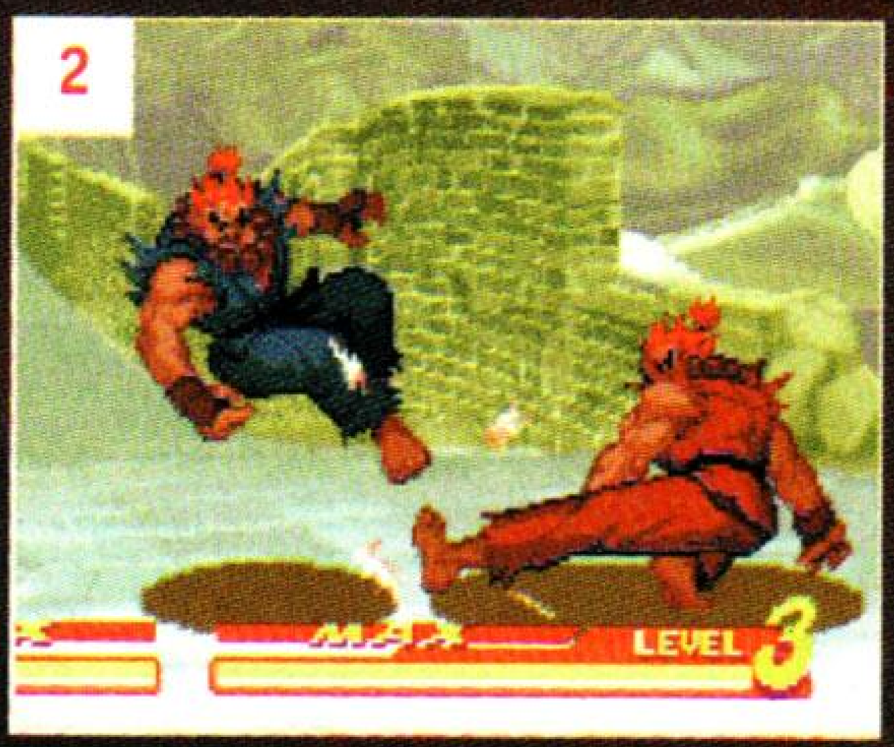

The two pictures above show red Akuma blocking a fireball strike. The recovery time on this move is quite long, so red Akuma retaliates with a low sweep.

2. PUNISH MISSED ATTACKS!

As you will have discovered by now, all the moves in Street Fighter Alpha are a balance of power and delay. The more powerful the move is, the longer the delay after performing it. This is especially true of the special moves, which can often result in an agonisingly long recovery time for missed or blocked attacks. If an opponent commits himself with such a move, and you block it, punish them with a low sweep or throw. The power/delay principle is also brought into play with most projectile attacks. Time an aerial attack to leap over the projectile and strike the frozen projectile thrower before they recover.

INTERMEDIATE OFFENSIVE TECHNIQUES

1. CHAINING

Certain ordinary kicks and punches can be strung together simultaneously to form an unblockable combination. The actual kicks and punches needed to do this vary from character to character but the central rule of thumb is that you progress from the lightest to the heaviest strength attack. With most characters the light punches and kicks can be used up to three times on their own before the receiving opponent is pushed out of range, so a chain can include up to five hits, eg. short, crouching short, crouching forward, roundhouse. Test each character in training mode to see which punches and kicks they can chain, as these will be the basis for their advanced combos. Chaining is a good method for beginner players to score big combos.

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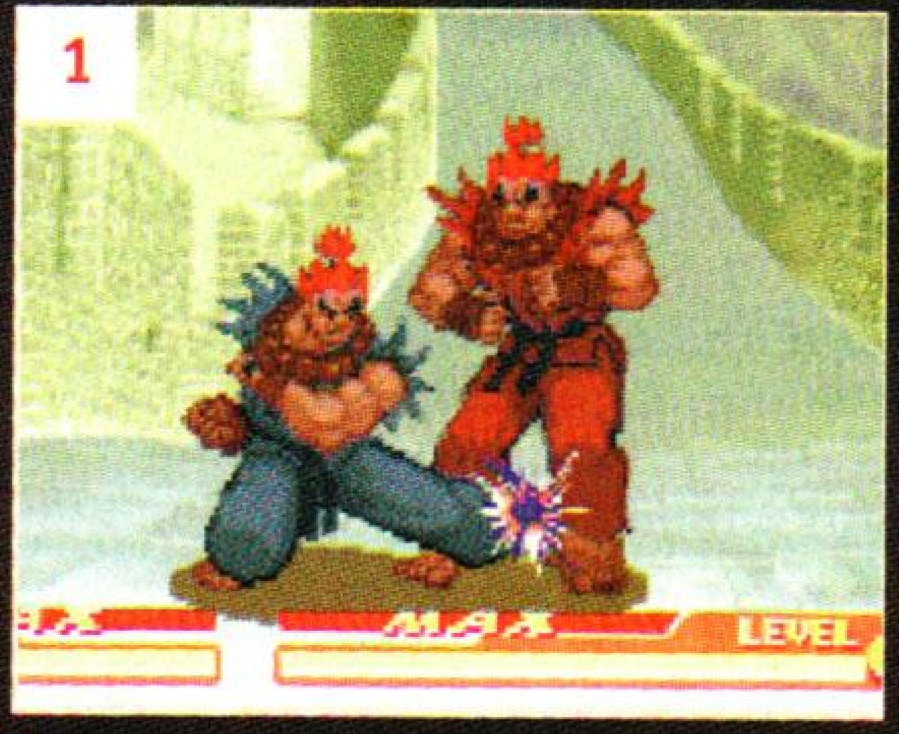

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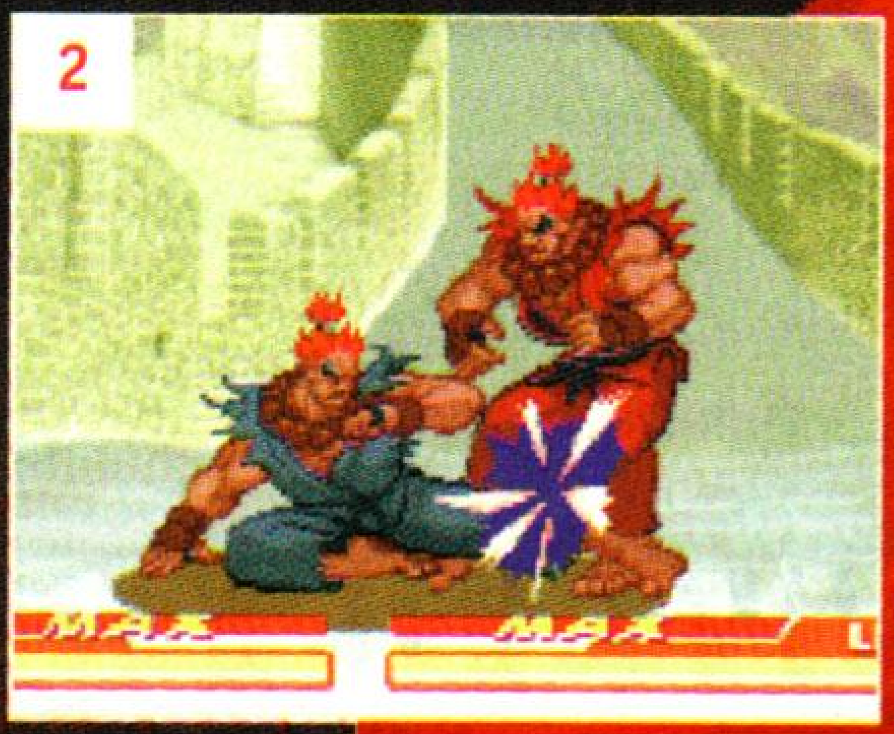

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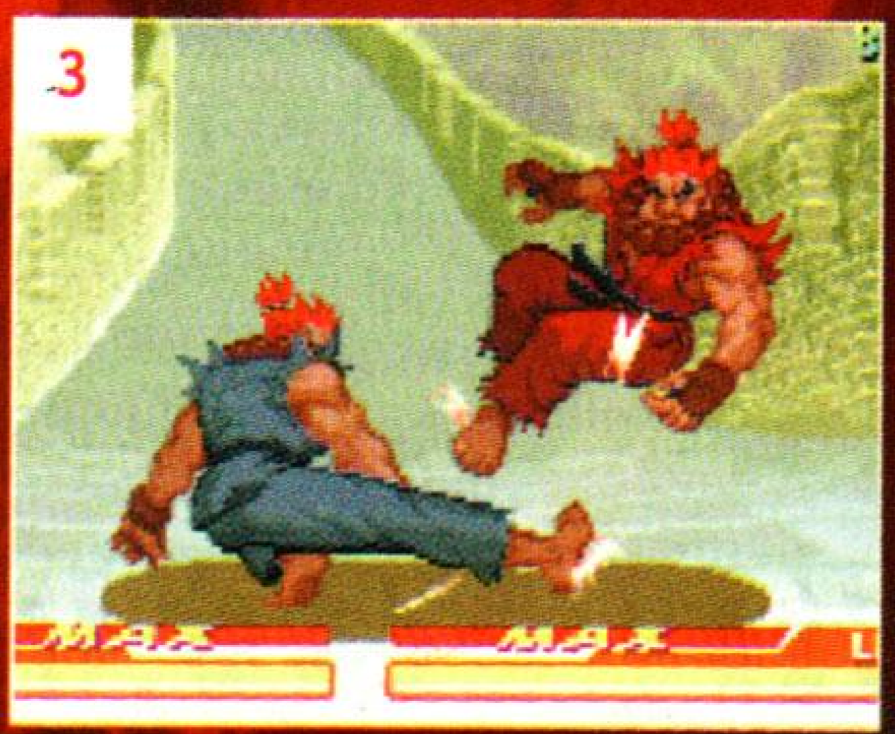
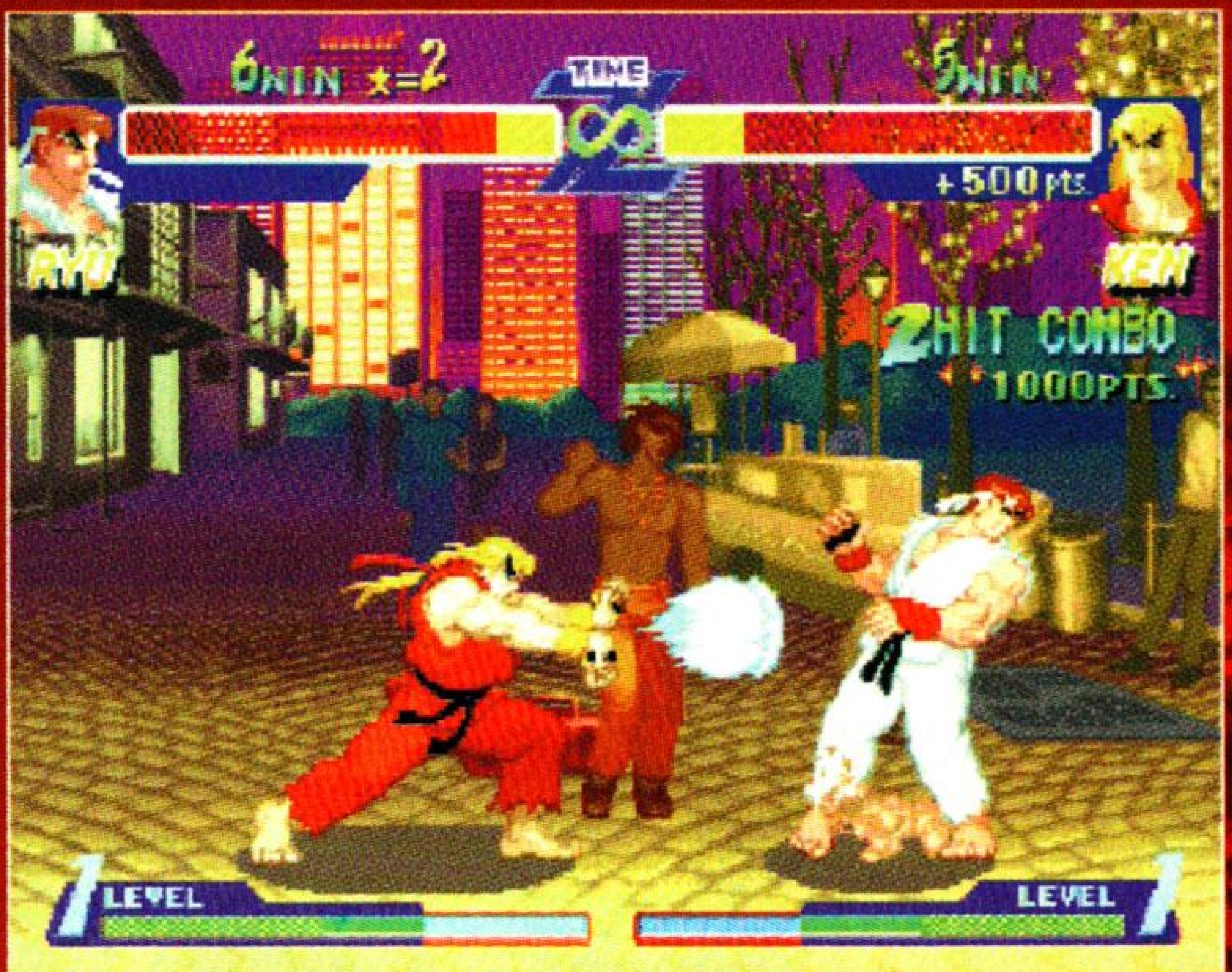


STREET FIGHTER ALPHA WARRIORS' DREAMS



2. TWO-IN-ONES

Similar in fashion to chaining, two-in-ones are the practice of combining ordinary hits and special moves into one joypad manoeuvre, the end result being that the two attacks hit in instant succession, and are unblockable. The trick is to put the ordinary hit you want to precede the special move *inside* the motion of the special. For instance, If you wanted the perform a fierce punch/fireball two-in-one the beat 'em up combination would be Down, Down-toward and Fierce (and hold fierce), toward and then release the fierce button at the same time as you would normally press it for an ordinary fireball. Providing you are close enough to your opponent you will punch them and proceed instantly into the fireball action. Charged special moves are the same principle, but slightly different. For a fierce punch/sonic boom two-in-one, charge back then press and hold fierce, push the pad towards your opponent and just as the animation for the punch ends release the button and press it again. Timing your button presses and moves to coincide with the actual on screen animation of your sprite is important, so learn the amount of frames each particular move takes. This is not so important with lighter strength two-in-ones, but crucial with fierce and roundhouse double hits. Please note that not all characters can perform two-in-ones with all of their moves. Experimenting is the key.

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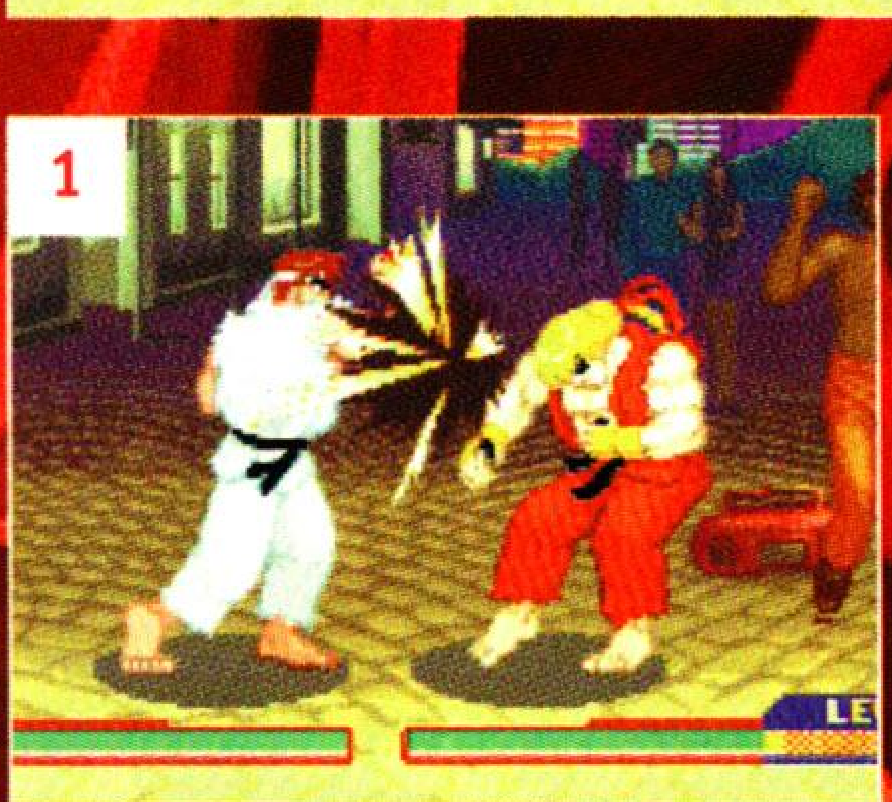

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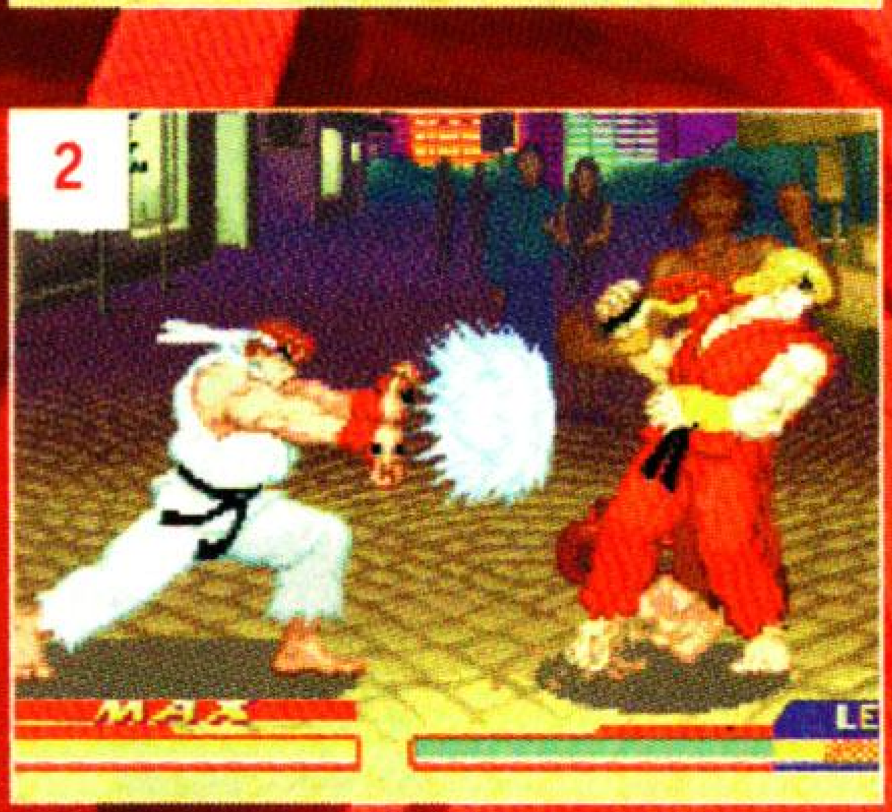
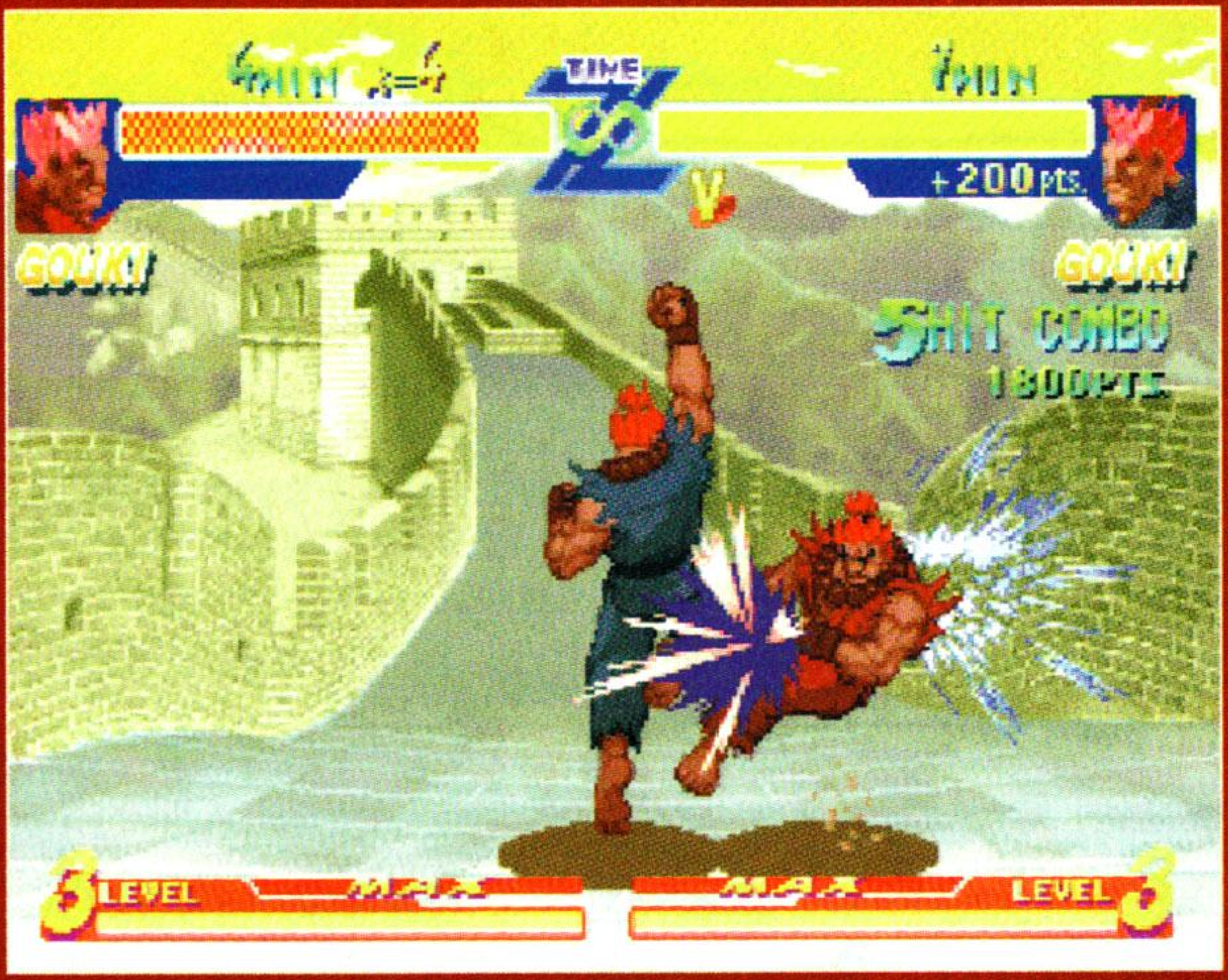


A great example of the Two-In-One. A fierce hit is followed up immediately by a fireball. This technique can be used by all fireball-using characters such as Ryu, Ken and Akuma.



3. COMBOS

Both chaining and two-in-ones are examples of basic combos. In fact two-in-ones can be added to the end of a chain for even bigger damage. A combo is a series of hits that are strung together which, after the initial strike connects, cannot be blocked.

Although they can be performed from a standing position, it is often best to use an aerial attack first, as you are more likely to land the initial hit from the air. Even if a combo is blocked, if it ends in a special move it will do a fraction of damage, and the chances are it will push your opponent away. Combos are the key to Street Fighter Alpha. A player who can convert every hit opportunity he gets into a solid three hit combo will more often than not be the one left standing at the end of the fight. Please bear in mind that there is no definitive combo for any particular character. It is a matter of what moves go well together, the amount of damage inflicted and personal preference. Some combos are easier, and more effective, than others, and these will become apparent the more you play.

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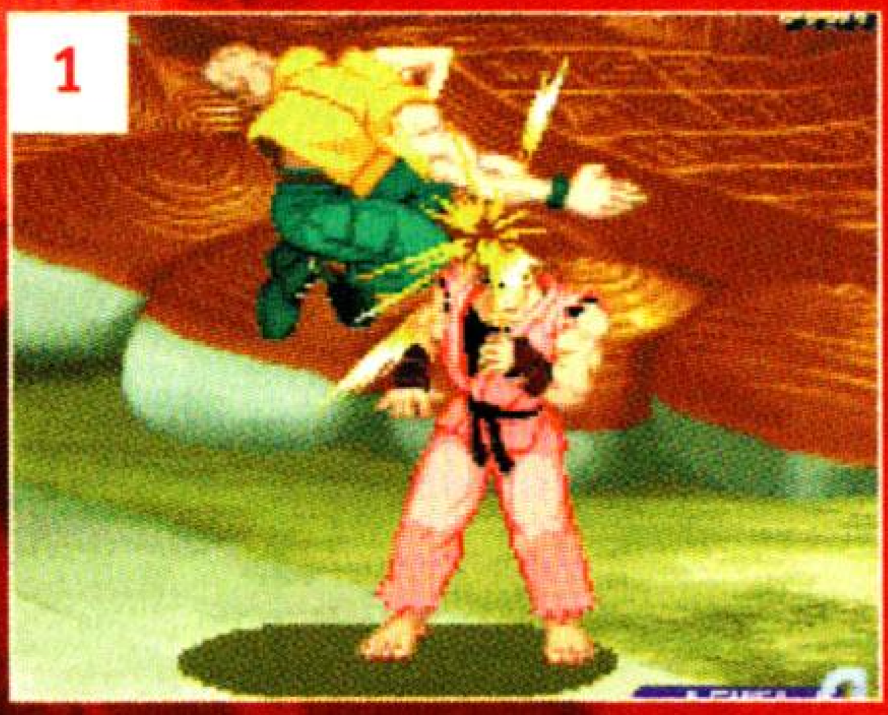

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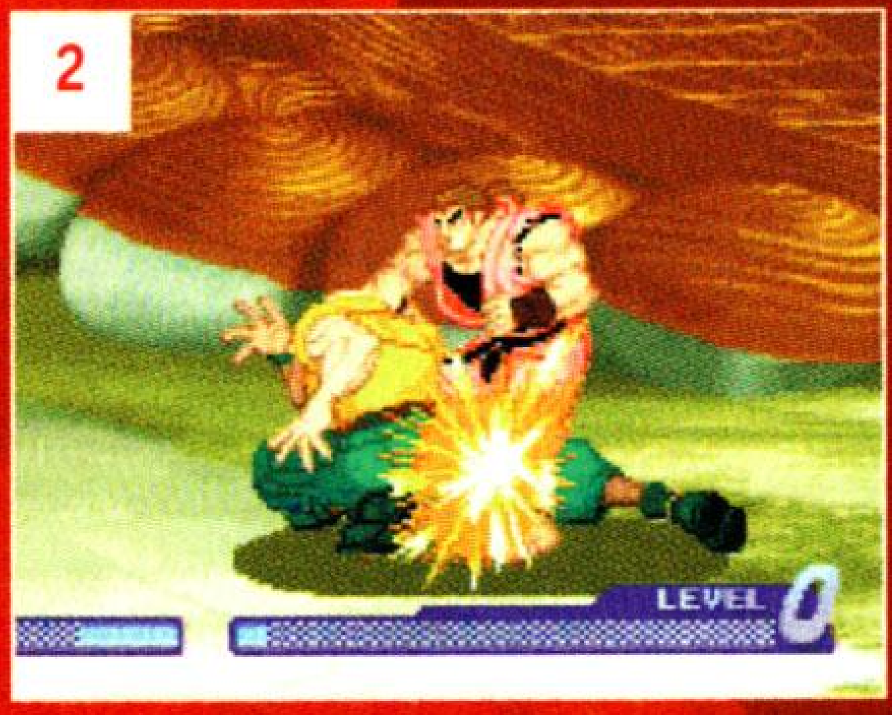

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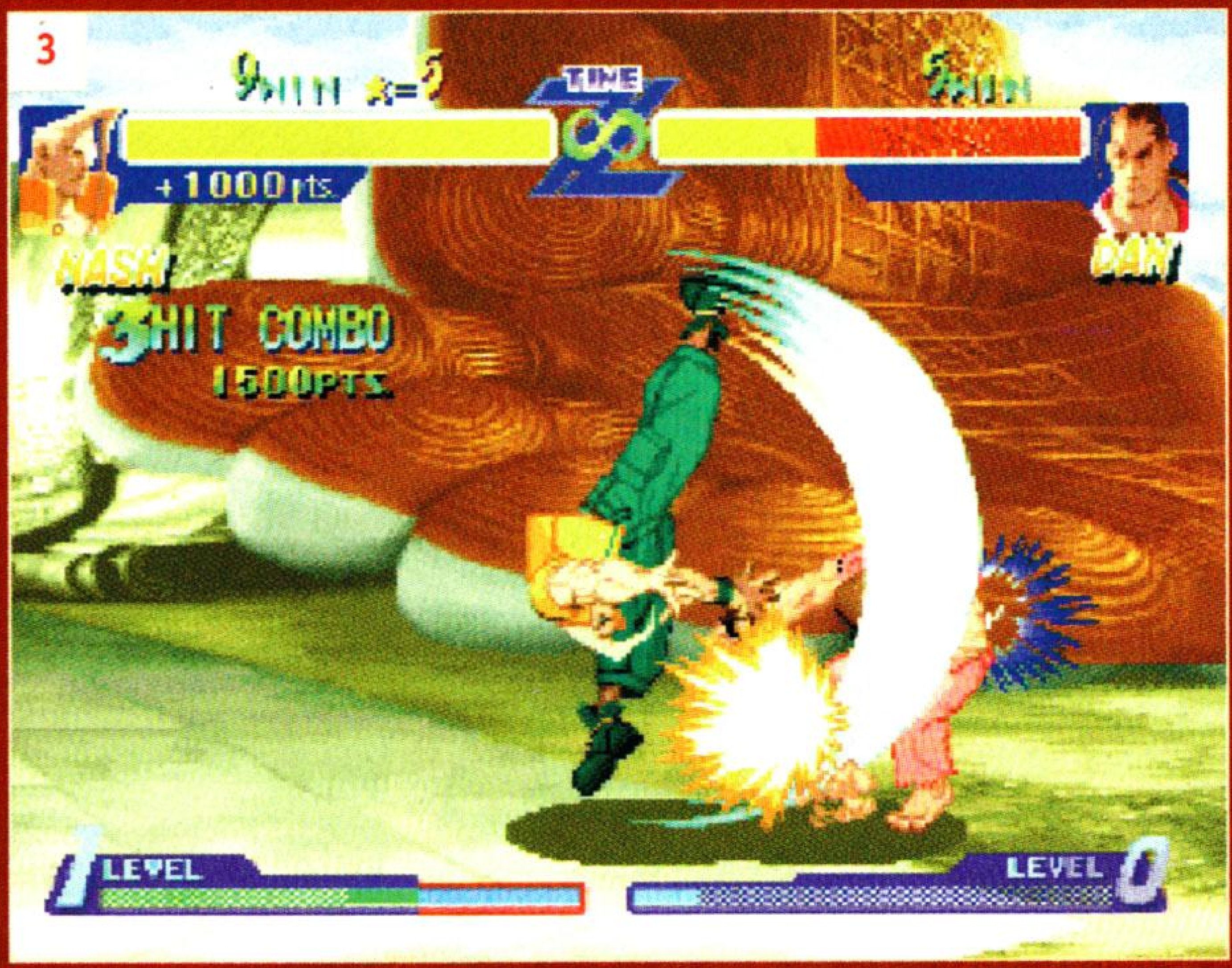


11WIN
TIME
★=2
7WIN
RYU
ADON
3HIT COMBO
1100PTS
1 LEVEL
LEVEL 0

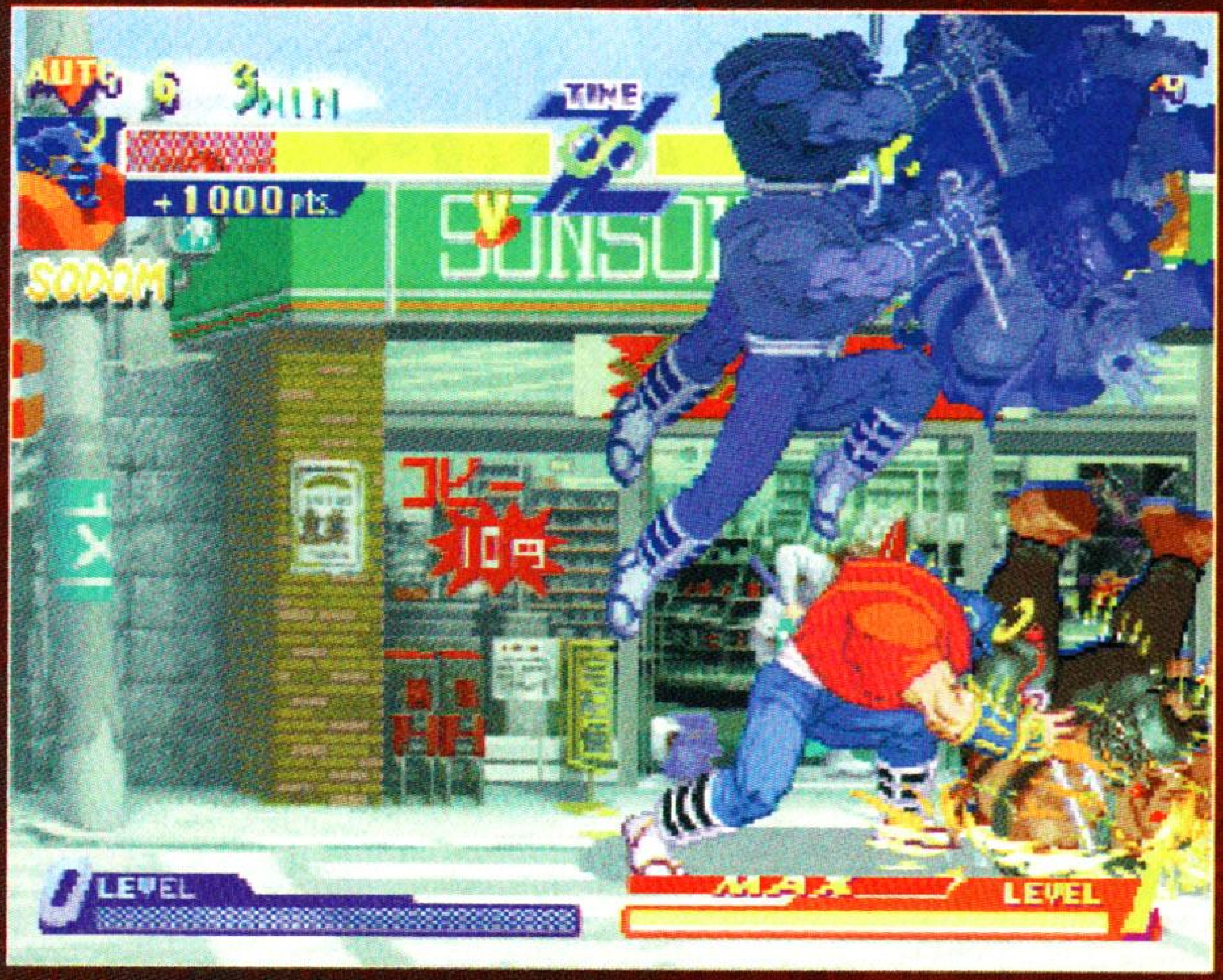
4. DIZZIES

Why are dizzies in the intermediate and not basic section? Quite simply because in Street Fighter Alpha they're bloody hard to get! Single combos are no longer enough to force your opponent to see stars and you've really got to continuously pummel them if you want a free attack. This is, of course, no bad thing, as thanks to Super Combos, stuns in Street Fighter Alpha normally result in the end of the fight! If you get stunned become a pad wiggling butting pounding frenzied mad thing to escape the dizzy before your opponent cleans your pipes for good!

5. PINNING

Pinning is the art of forcing your opponent to block the moment they get up off the ground after being knocked down. Though your opponent can buffer an attack to perform it the second they are free to move (and thus be hit), a well timed (and placed) strike can reduce their chances of success. Favourites attacks for pinning are jumping roundhouses, jumping shorts, fireballs (cheesy), and any form of overhead attack. Gauging whether you are in range to pin your enemy, and the resultant timing and accuracy needed to insure the attack is successful, are the true qualities of a master.

13WIN ★=2
TIME
7WIN
KEN
ADON
3 LEVEL
MAX
LEVEL



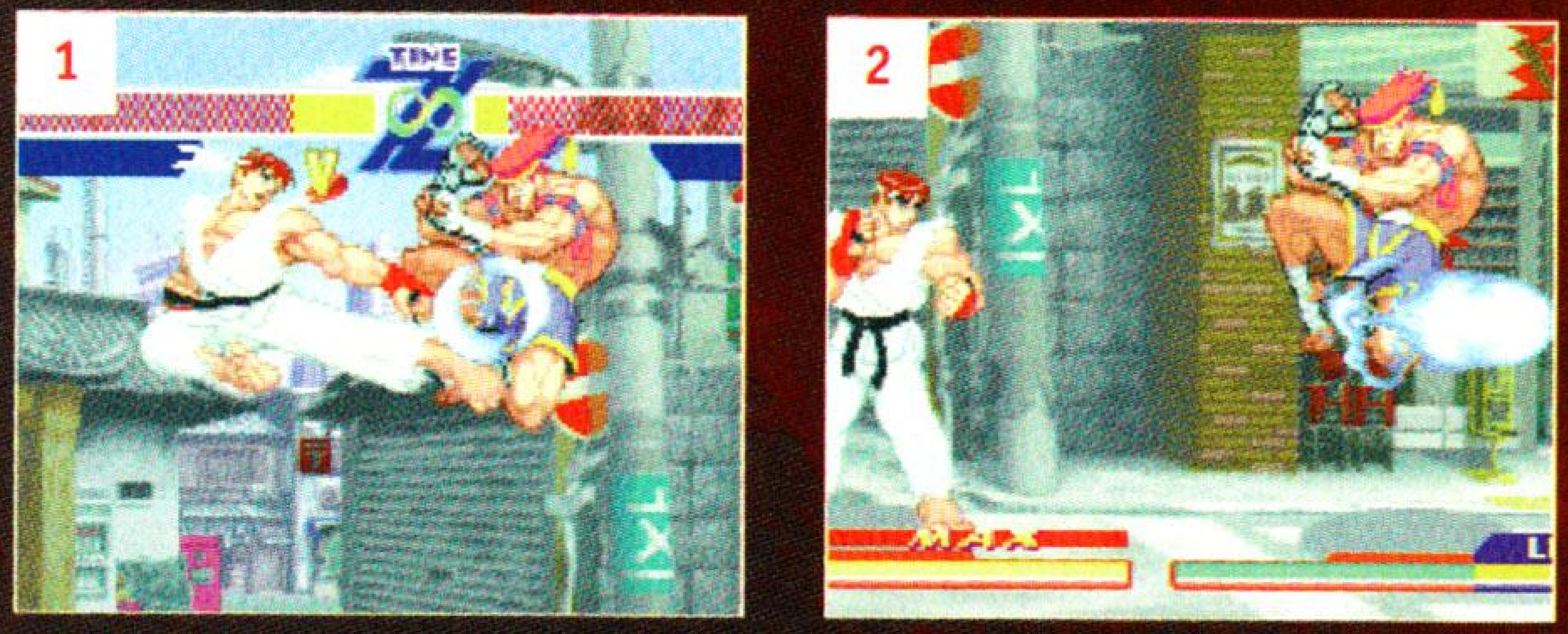
INTERMEDIATE DEFENSIVE TECHNIQUES

1. ALPHA COUNTER

One of the features new to the Street Fighter series is the Alpha Counter. Providing a character has at least one level accumulated on the Super Combo meter, they have the opportunity to convert a defensive block into an offensive strike. The moment you see the blue 'blocked' circle at the point of contact, simply rotate the pad through a quarter semi-circle from away (the block) to down and then press either a punch or kick button (depending on the character). An Alpha Counter is marked by a distinctive blue swirl surrounding the unfortunate recipient. Although a nice idea in principle, Alpha Counters do not do much damage, and are mostly used for turning the flow of the fight, or escaping from a corner. However, **MAXIMUM** is of the belief that your single power Super Combo is more effectively put to use elsewhere.

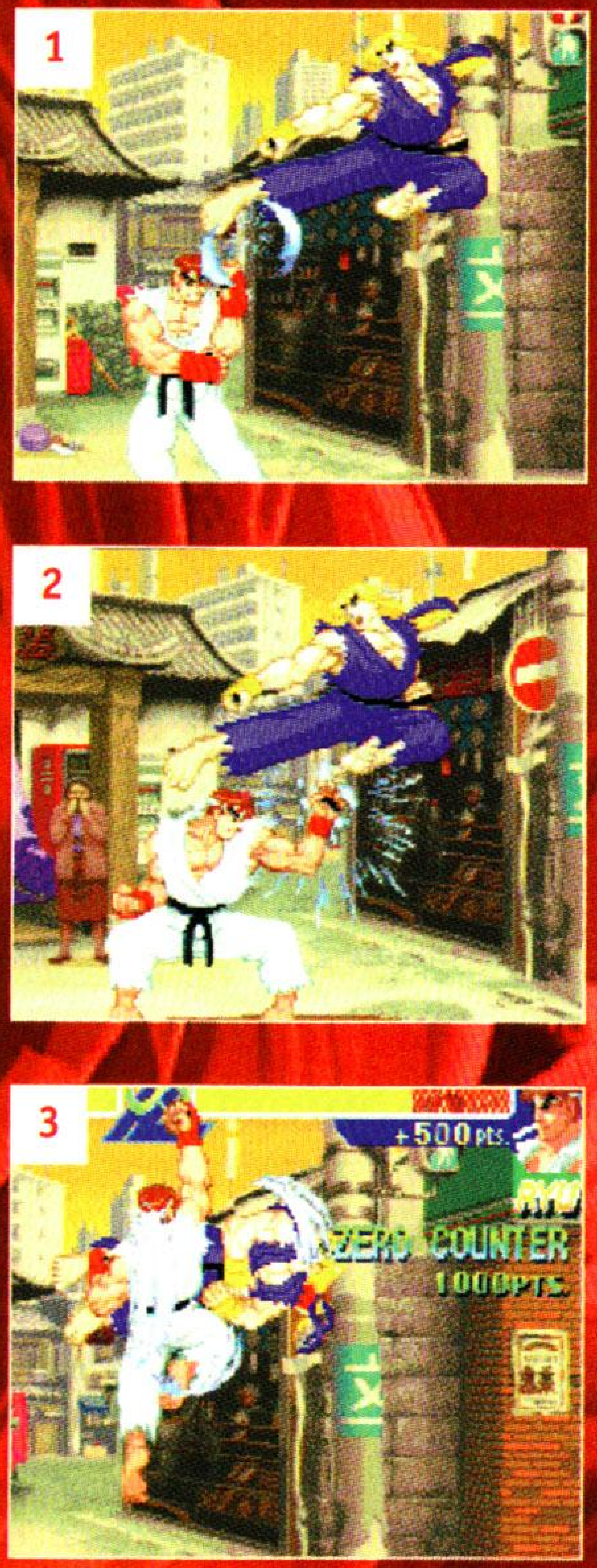
2. COUNTER THROWS

Commonly regarded as the cheapest move in the game by the masters, throws can be put to use in a variety of cheesy tactics to devastating effect. Fortunately, Capcom have provided a few measures to counter this move du fromage, and none more applicable than the counter throw. As your opponent throws you, perform the throw motion back *on him*. Ie. press towards and fierce punch or kick the split second you see him grabbing you for the throw. If you are quick enough (and you have to be pretty damn quick) your character will land on his feet, taking minimal damage, and gaining a tech bonus for your troubles.



3. AERIAL BLOCKING

Also new to Street Fighter Alpha is the ability to make your character block in the air. This doesn't always guarantee you safety, as certain attacks will pass through the block anyway, but it does mean no more falling into projectiles over mistimed jumps. Get into the habit of pressing down-away when you jump. Not only will this perform the air block should you need it, but it will also store up an attack for any character who uses charged special moves.

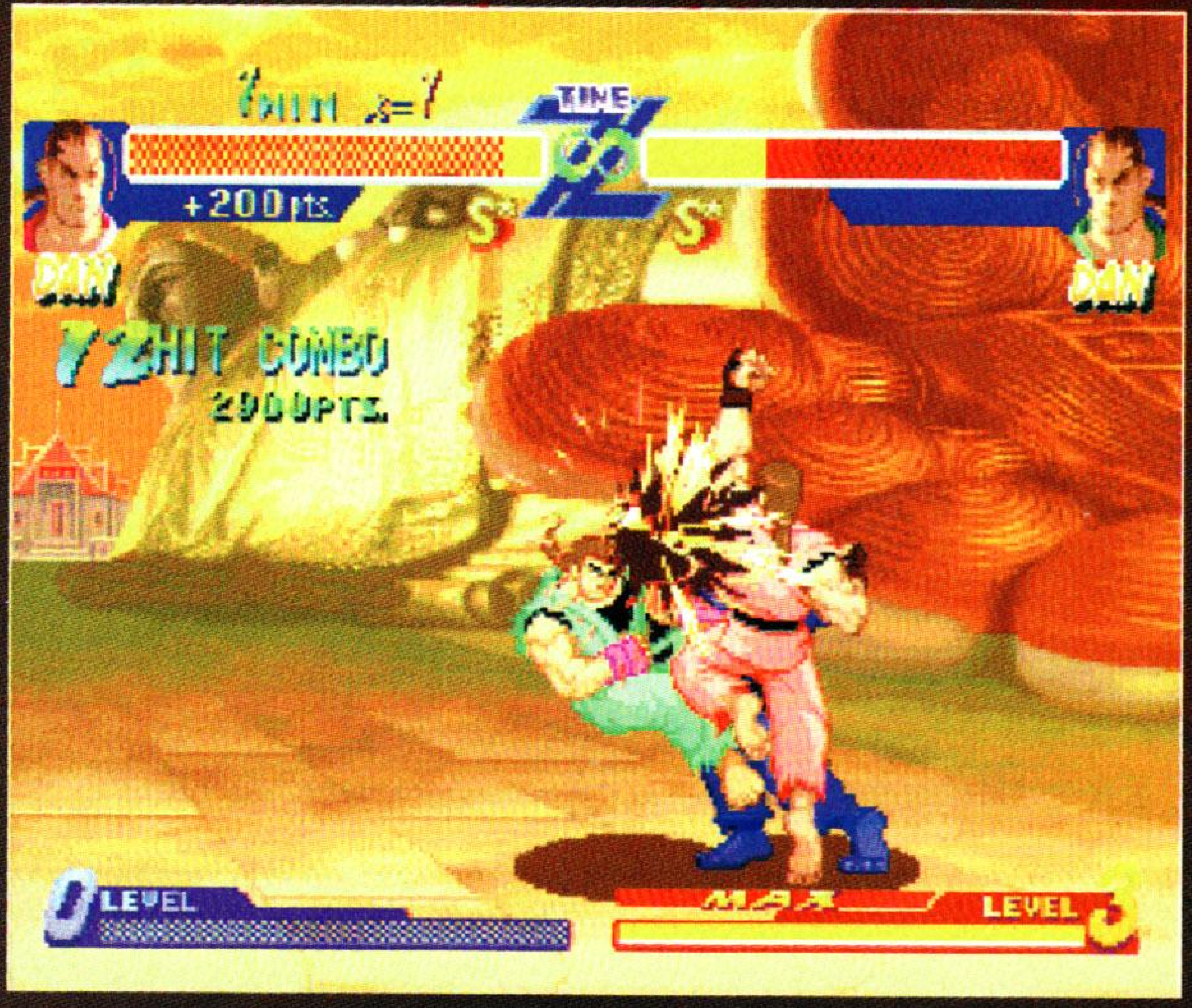


A sequence of Alpha Counter action (known as the Zero Counter in the Japanese version of the game). Although this surprises the opposition, it does drain your Super Combo energy bar.

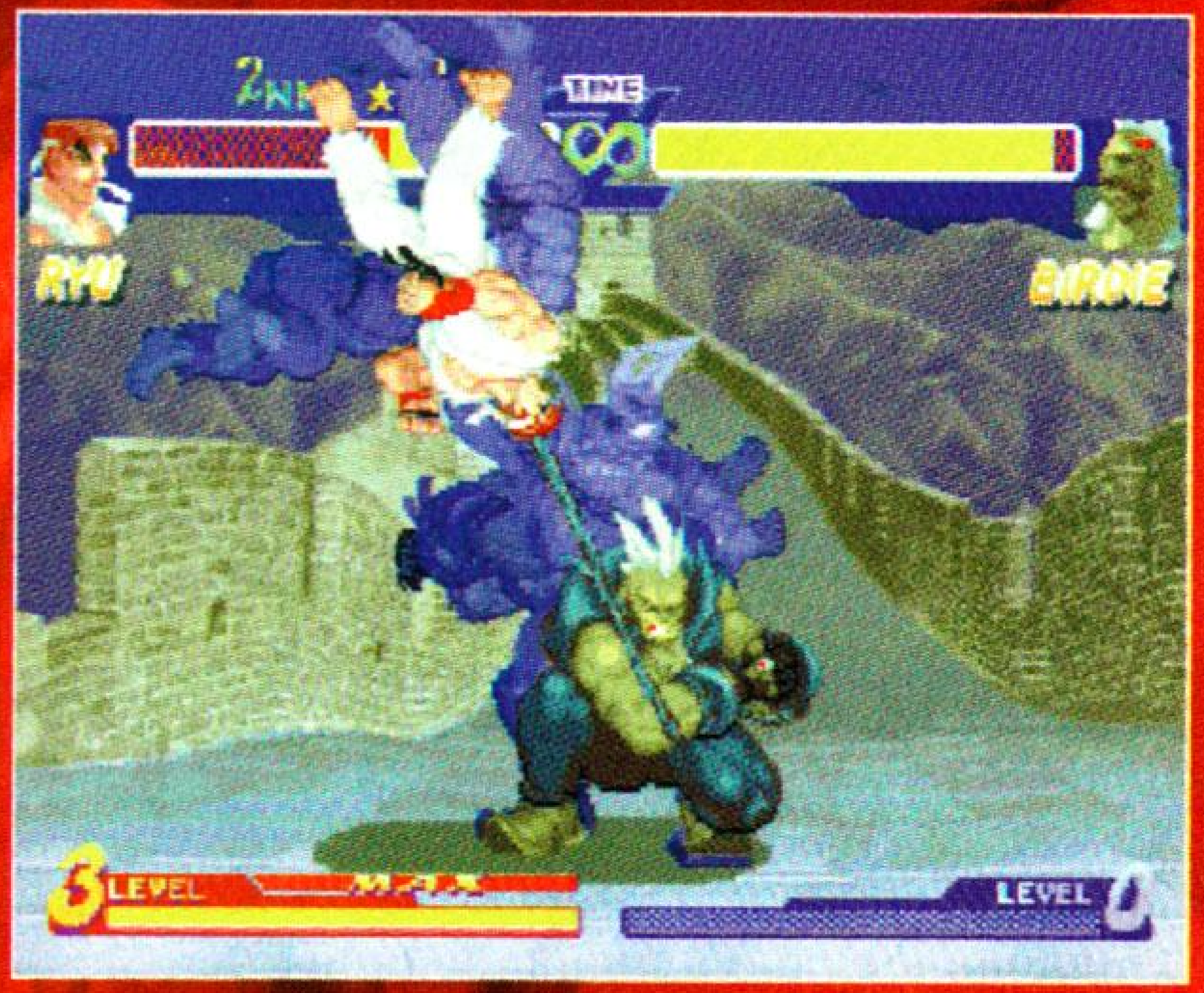
ADVANCED OFFENSIVE TECHNIQUES

1. THE SUPER COMBO

Super combos are extra special attacks that have the potential for causing more damage than any other move in the game. Characterised by the delayed blue shadow of your fighter as the attack is performed, these moves require the Super Combo energy meter to be filled to at least one level. The bar goes up to three, and is filled every time you perform a normal or special move. The quickest way to fill the bar however, is to strike your opponent, whether the attacks are blocked or not. Once the bar is full, the player can select to activate a Super Combo at one of three power strengths by performing the necessary beat 'em up manoeuvres and then pressing either one, two or three of the corresponding punch or kick buttons simultaneously. For the ultimate in destructive power, use a chain followed by a two-in-one Super Combo. These are *very* hard to use consistently and involve heavy buffering. Super combos often offer a brief period of invulnerability as they are initiated, so use them to counter both projectiles and aerial attacks. Finally, a commonly overlooked fact about Super Combos is that a lot of them allow you to continue tapping the buttons while they are being performed for extra hits (like Kens super dragon punch on the spot).



Super Combos are absolutely incredible moves which are best reserved for the end of bouts. The example above shows one of the more spectacular techniques - Dan's Dragon-style Super Finish.

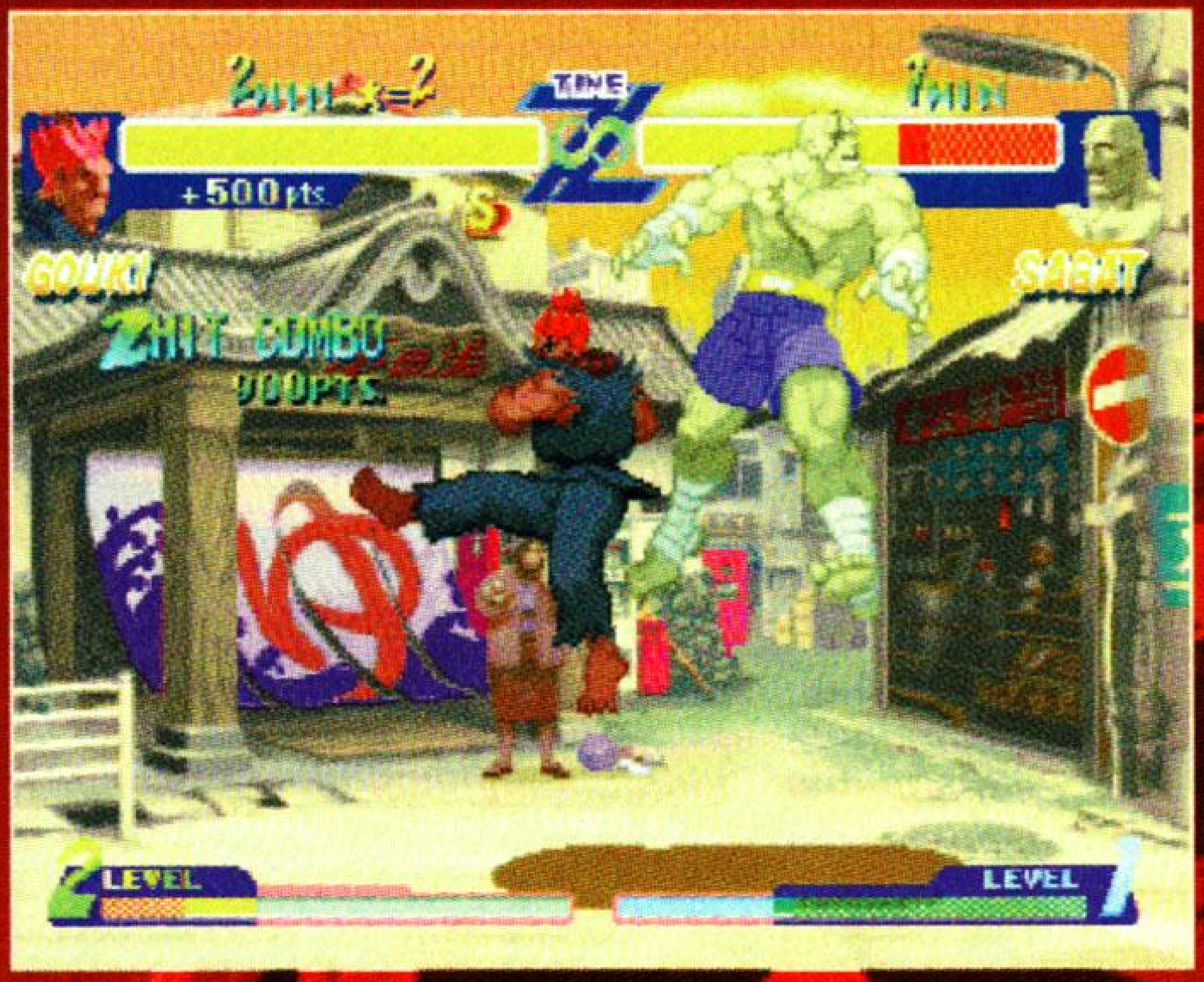


The power of Birdie! The Super Combo finishes are best saved for when your Super Combo energy bar is at full-power. Unleash a Level Three Super Combo and watch that energy bar drain away! Excellent.

2. BUFFERING

Buffering is the technique of starting special moves before your character is in a position to perform them, and then finishing the move at the exact time your character is able to release it. The principle behind this is that the actual d-pad manoeuvres required for a special move can be performed at any time: when jumping, when being hit, whilst performing another special move, when lying on the ground, etc, and that you can finish the execution of the move with the button press the moment your character is 'freed' from whatever they are doing. This is crucial both to performing a super-combo two-in-one, and/or playing as a character who uses charged special moves. For instance, buffering is needed to perform one of Charlie's basic combos. Jump towards your opponent with a roundhouse kick and start charging down-away the moment you leave the ground, so you are effectively charging *in the air*. Hit deep with the kick and follow up with a crouching short the moment you touch the ground, still holding down-away. By now you should have charged enough time to use his flash kick , so finish off with a foward-flash kick two-in-one (the forward is chained to the short) to complete the combo.

Buffering also enables you to utilise Super Combos in two-in-ones. It is impractical to perform the standard super-combo action in mid combo (in the time it takes to move the beat 'em up in two quarter circles your opponent will have blocked or got in a counter) so a bit of buffering is needed. For example to perform a jumping roundhouse, fierce-super fireball two-in-one with Ryu you would perform the first fireball



motion in the air whilst jumping towards your opponent, hit with the roundhouse, then two-in-one the second fireball motion (as described in the Intermediate section) for spectacular results. Use the three-in-one punch button option to deliver a strength three super fireball to complete the combo for up to eight hits!

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA
WARRIORS' DREAMS

3. JUGGLING

A technique first witnessed in Mortal Kombat, juggling allows for certain characters to strike opponents multiple times while they are in the air. Specific attacks knock an opponent off his feet and upwards, and these are then followed with a combination of hits to cause maximum damage before they return to earth. An opponent who has been knocked into the air cannot block, and is therefore vulnerable to any attack that can reach him.

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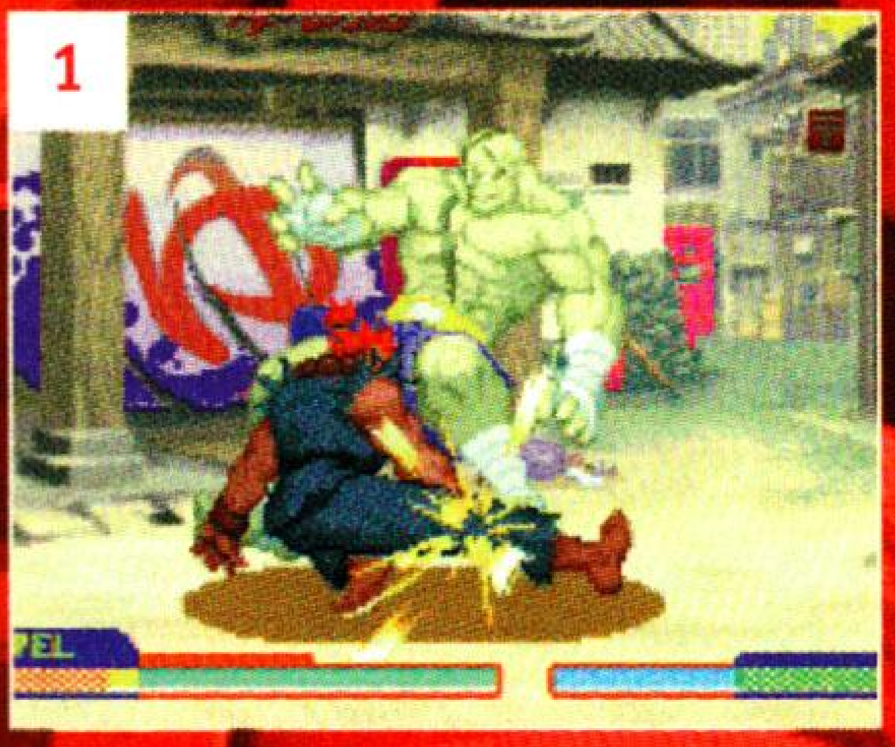

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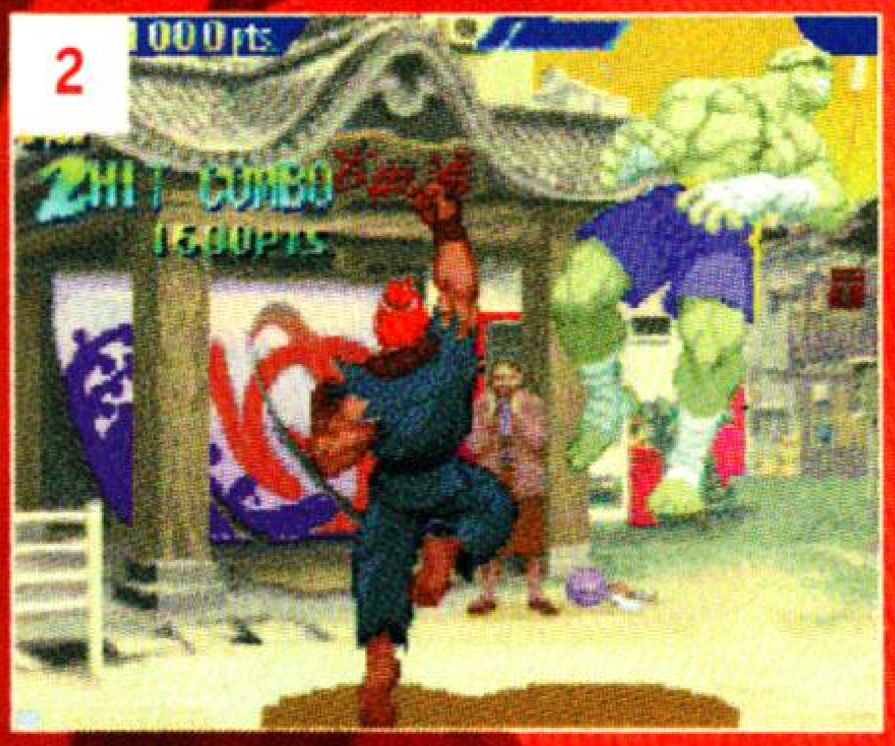
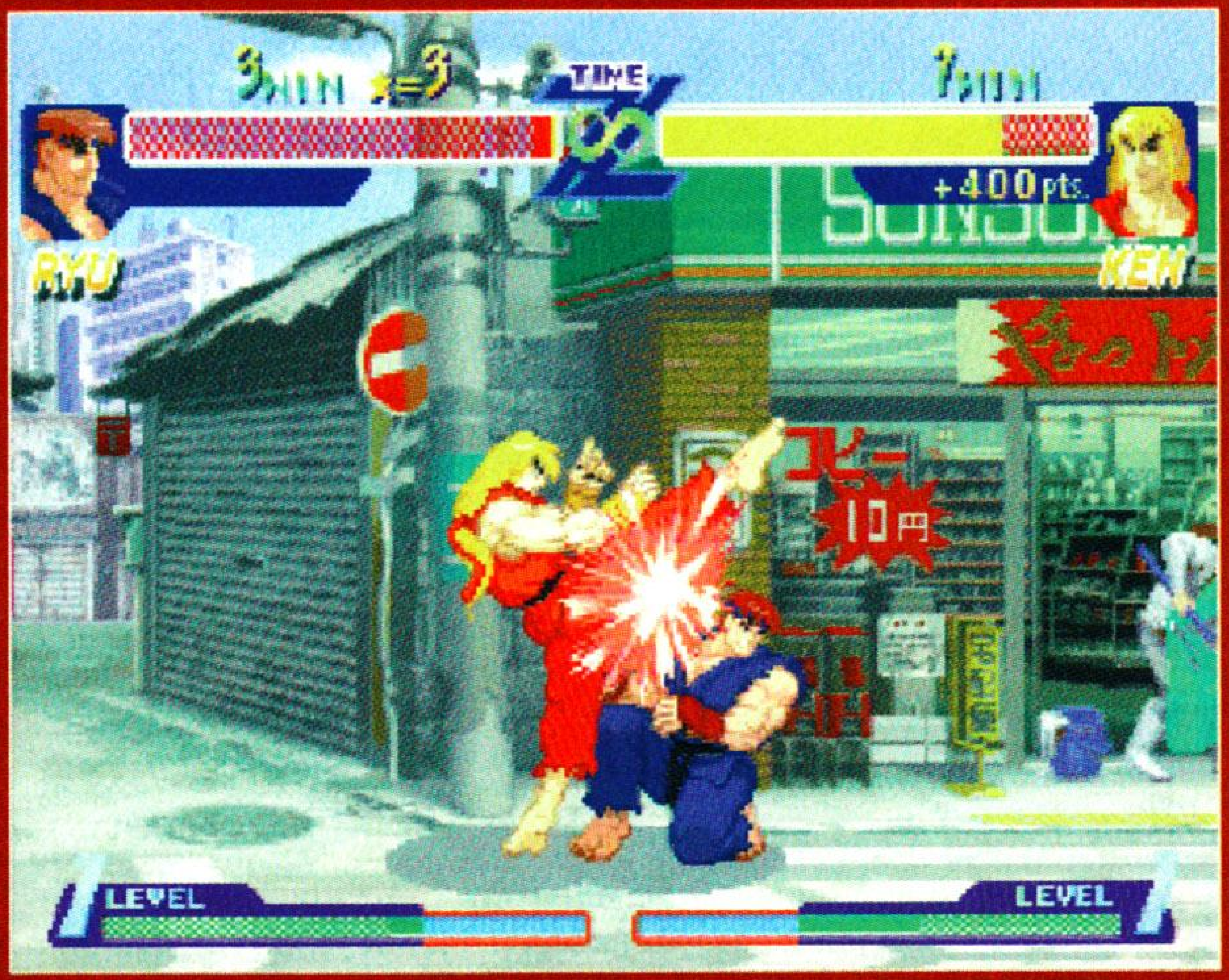


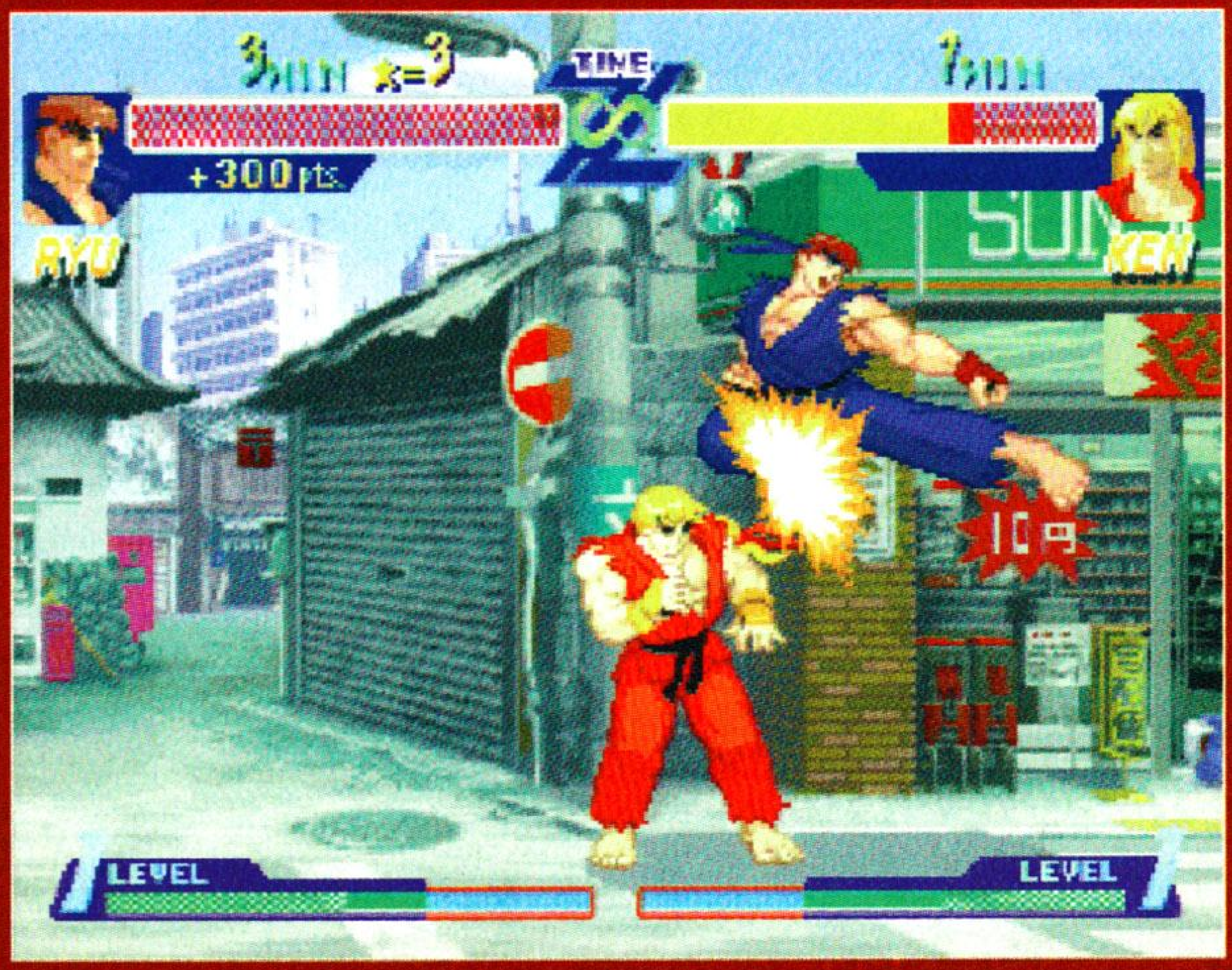
4. OVERHEAD ATTACKS

Present in Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo but exaggerated in Street Fighter Alpha, overhead attacks are charging strikes performed on the ground that will go over a crouching opponent's block to inflict big damage. The standard jumping attack formula is a high aerial attack followed by a crouching ground attack. Therefore, most players will block high then automatically go low. Once you have mastered the art of the overhead attack (towards and either medium kick or punch for most characters) you can crush an opponent who is in the habit of the high/low block by following up your jumping attack with an overhead. Overhead attacks are also a good cheesy attack to use on opponents who are just getting to their feet, as most players will again instinctively block low.

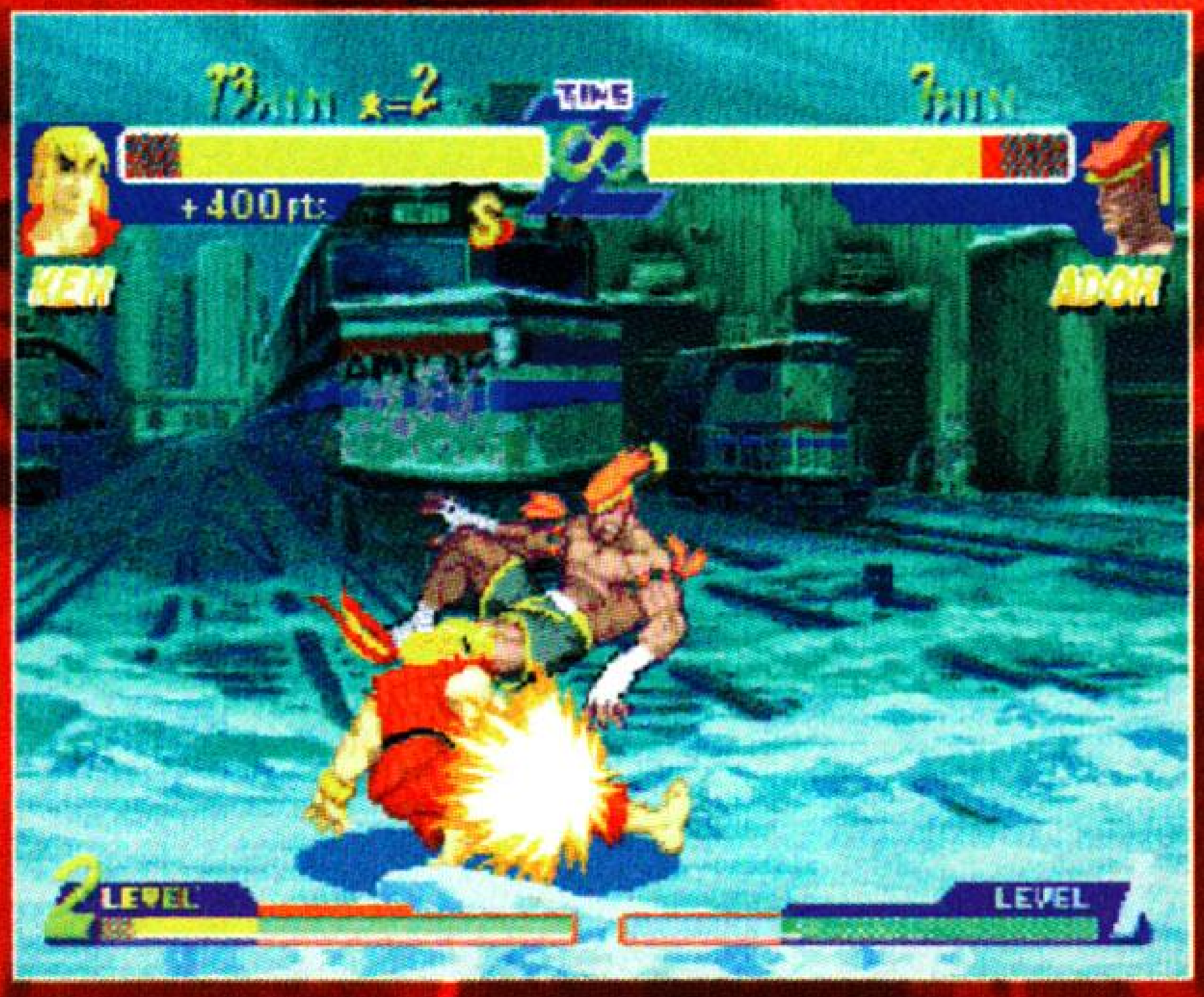
5. CROSS-UP ATTACKS

A cross-up attack is a flying attack aimed to strike at the back of your opponents head, thus reversing the blocking direction and generally messing them up. In Street Fighter Alpha characters are now relegated to using only one type of attack to successfully perform a cross-up (normally medium kick), and it's much harder to gauge. You must time the attack very high to achieve it consistently, which makes a follow-up combo much harder. Still, definitely worth mastering.





Crossing-up was a lot easier in previous Street Fighter games and formed the basis for the majority of the combination attacks. In Alpha, typically only the medium kick can be used to cross-up.



Counter against moves with long recovery times by blocking and striking back. The low sweep is the perennial favourite, but it really is quite cheap.

ADVANCED DEFENSIVE TECHNIQUES

1. COUNTER ATTACK!

They say the best form of defensive is attack and nowhere is this more true than in Street Fighter Alpha. The best way to avoid a nasty combo is to stop your opponent before he gets the first hit in. If the attack is coming from the air, then most characters have a special move designed specifically for taking down an airborne opponent (ie. the dragon punch) but failing that a roundhouse kick or aerial kick timed to strike their outstretched limb normally does the trick. This also applies for ground attacks. When an opponent makes a strike and misses, the contact point on his outstretched limb is only dangerous for a brief moment, meaning you can hit back at *his* limb without risking an injury. For example, if an enemy opponent tries to sweep you and misses, you can return the favour and sweep kick back at his leg. The chances are, his sweep will have just missed and his leg will easily be in range of yours.

2. DEFENSIVE BUFFERING

When your character is knocked to the ground, and your opponent comes in for an attack in an attempt to pin you (force you to block as you get off the floor) by buffering a special move as you get up, you can time it to work the split second you are free to move. Commonly this is used by characters with a dragon punch style attack, and reverses the flow of the fight.

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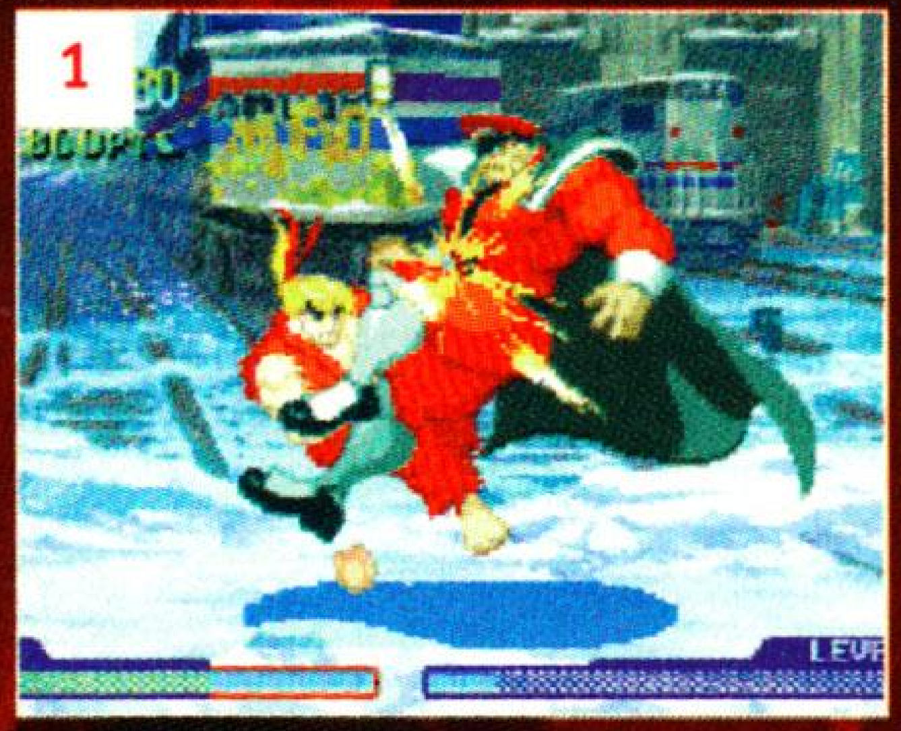

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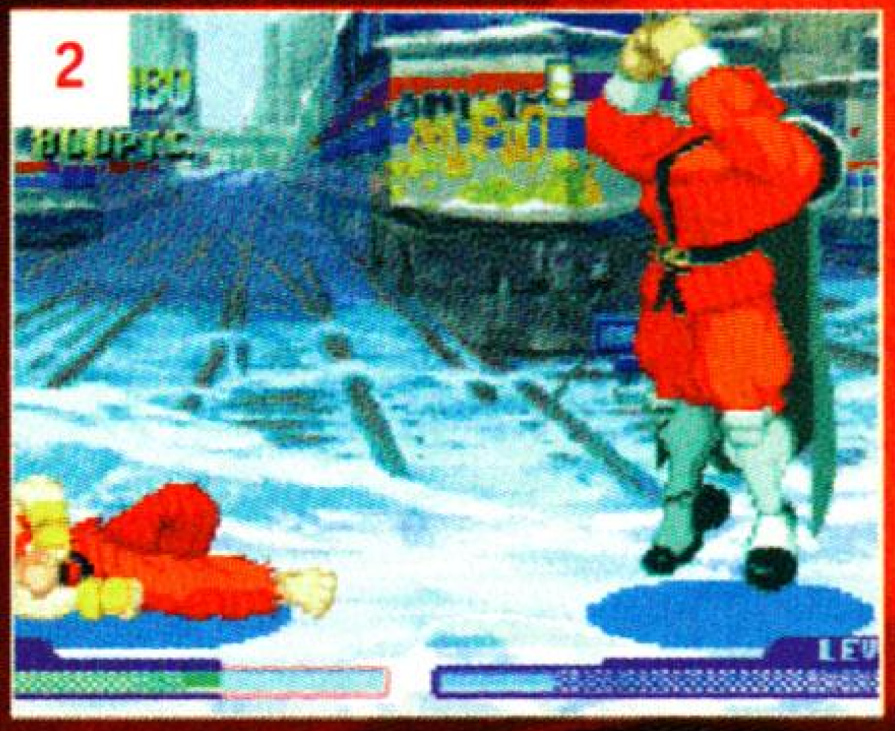

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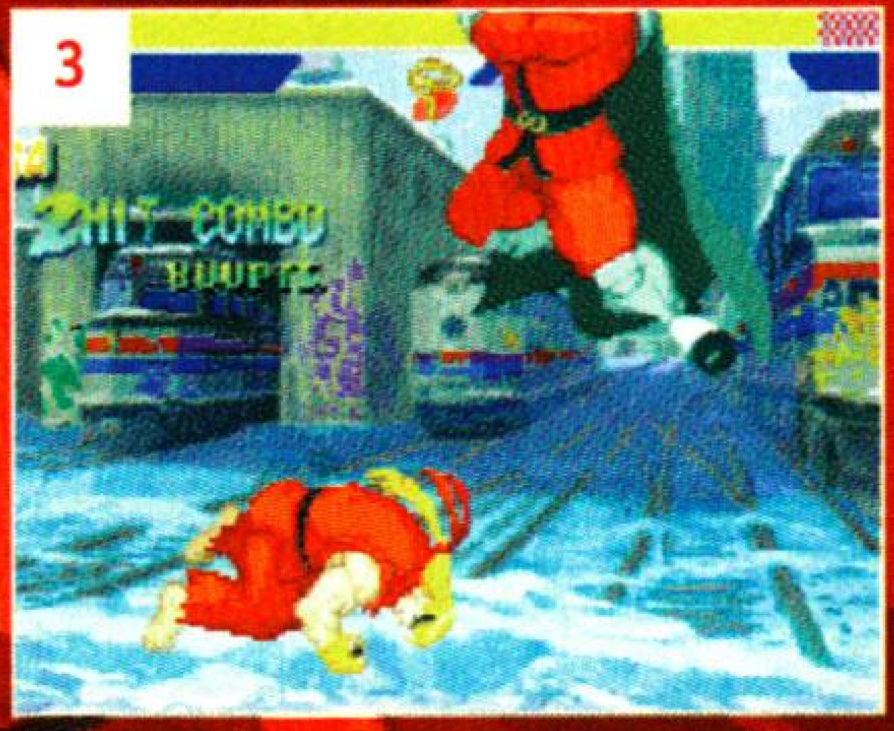

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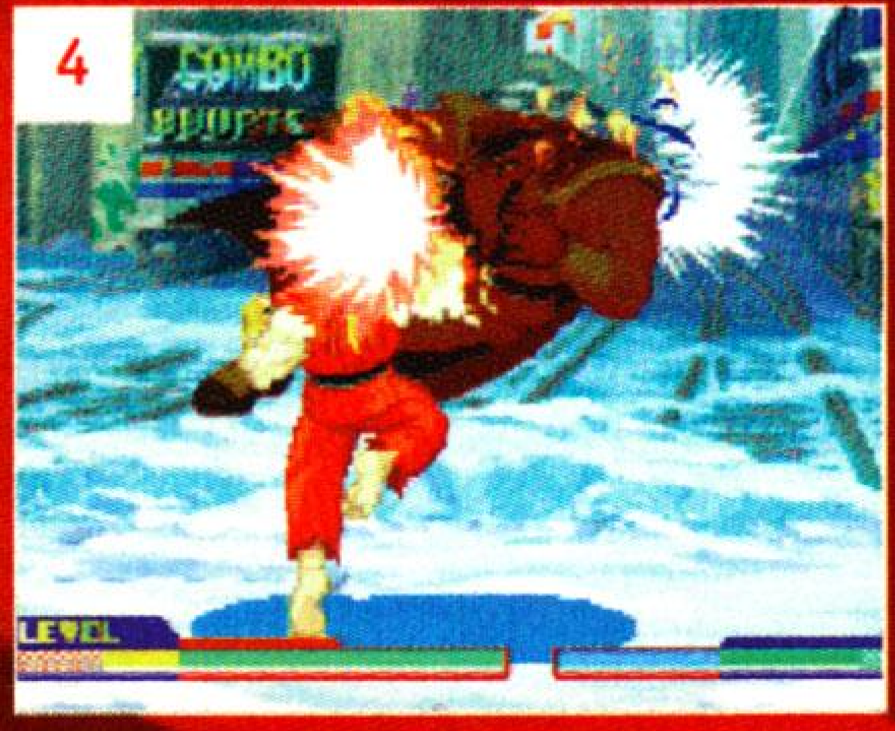

The defensive buffering in motion. Execute the Dragon Punch motion while on the ground to execute a speedy response as your opponent closes in for what he thinks is the kill.

THE GREATEST STREETFIGHTER YET ARRIVES ON CONSOLE!

AKUMA THE MIGHTIEST WARRIOR: CHARACTER PROFILE

WIN
TIME
RYU
GOUKI
LEVEL
MAX
LEVEL

Now that we've run through the mechanics of the various techniques you'll need to master, let's put them into practice and 'learn' a character. We've selected Akuma as our guinea pig for several reasons. His basic moves correspond to several standard characters (specifically the two most 'popular' characters, Ryu and Ken) so a lot of Akuma's strategies are applicable to other fighters, while his large range of special moves and Super Combos affords a great diversity of offensive and defensive techniques once you get a bit more proficient with him.

STEP ONE: THE BASICS

1. BASIC OFFENCE

Practice controlling Akuma in training mode. His standard kicks and punches are incredibly similar to Ryu's. Note that his crouching forward reaches further than his crouching roundhouse. Also note how a particular direction and particular punch or kick strength produces special results. For Akuma down and fierce is an upwards uppercut, towards and forward is a hopping overhead kick and towards and strong is a double charging overhead strike. Akuma is quite a fast character, with a good ranged jump, which you need to learn to gauge for cross ups and deep hits. He has no problems leaping over any projectile attack, either diagonally or vertically.

TIME
+300 PTS.
GOUKI
SAGAT
LEVEL
MAX
LEVEL

Once you have got to grips with his basic moves start practising his specials. The most important are obviously the fireball and dragon punch so really work on making them instantaneous. You cannot attain the rank of master until your character's special moves are almost subconsciously executable. You should not need to stop and think how to do a hurricane kick, you should just do it instinctively. Learn the recovery time on each of Akuma's special moves. He takes a lot longer to recover from his burning fireball than from his regular blue fireball, so make sure you only use the burning fireball when you've got the distance. Also note that Akuma is a 'juggling' character, and his roundhouse hurricane kick and dragon punch hit repeatedly. Finally in training mode practice the basic aerial/ground attack combo of flying roundhouse, crouching roundhouse. Notice how, when you hit high, the computer blocks your second hit, but when you hit low (deep) the computer cannot block your sweep. Learn the optimal contact point for jumping attacks and how to time the strike.

2. BASIC DEFENCE

Play against the CPU and spend the entire bout blocking. Do not throw a single punch. See if you can block every attack. This may sound silly but it really is crucial to make blocking an instinctive action. Learn how to block high then low for a jumping attack. Learn how the crouching block is actually a very good offensive stance. Although you are blocking you are ready to unleash a low sweep, or uppercut at any time. If you are having trouble mastering the Dragon Punch, try using a standing roundhouse instead to safely take down aerial opponents.

STEP 2: INTERMEDIATE

1. INTERMEDIATE OFFENCE

By now you should be ready to start incorporating some of Akuma's more exotic special moves into your style. Aerial fireballs are superb for keeping opponents at a distance whilst building up your Super Combo meter, while his teleport is invaluable for escaping corner traps and confusing the opposition. Akuma also has a nifty diving kick, useful for starting combos, activated by pressing down and forward kick when in the air.

Training mode is essential for practising chains and two-in-ones. Chains that work well with Akuma are:

1. A standing jab, standing strong, crouching roundhouse
2. Crouching short twice, crouching roundhouse
3. Crouching short, crouching forward, crouching roundhouse

Note that all of these chains can be used as follow-ons from an aerial attack. Akuma is particularly flexible in the two-in-one department as well. Fierce punch and fireball/dragon punch two-in-ones work especially well up close (his dragon hits as many times as Kens!), though we wouldn't recommend a burning fireball two-in-one as the recovery time is agonisingly long. Our favourite basic combos for Akuma are:

1. Jumping roundhouse, short, short, crouching forward-fierce fireball two-in-one.
2. Jumping fierce, fierce-fierce dragon punch two-in-one

If you find another combo that you prefer, work on beefing it up with the longest chain and highest strength two-in-one possible. But remember, if you can't do it consistently, it's worthless. Finally, if you're a bit of a cheesy player, a jab burning fireball is a great method for pinning fallen opponents.

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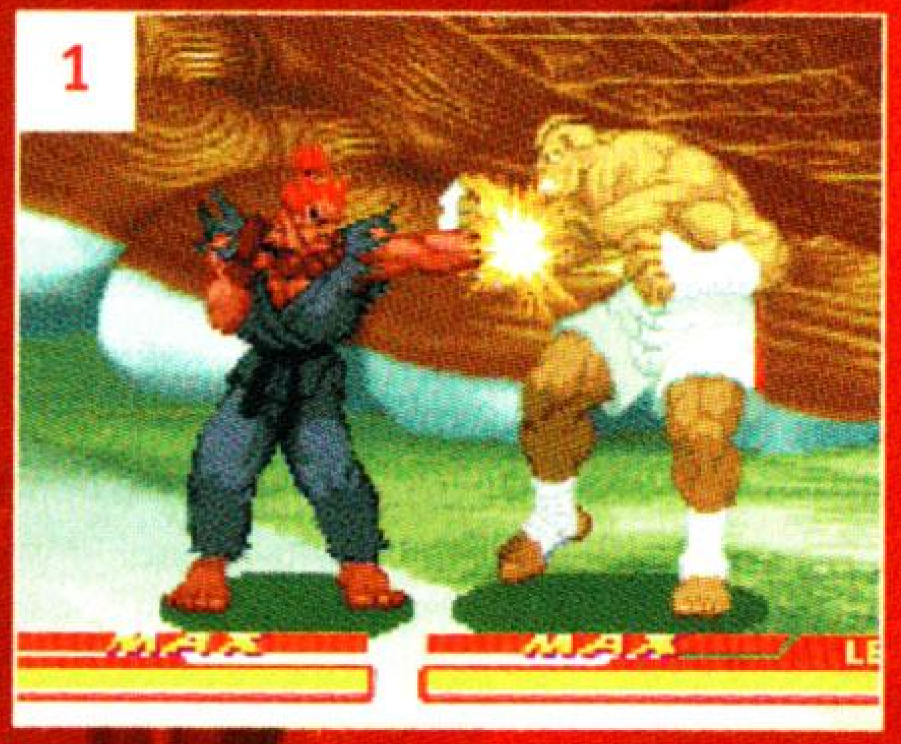

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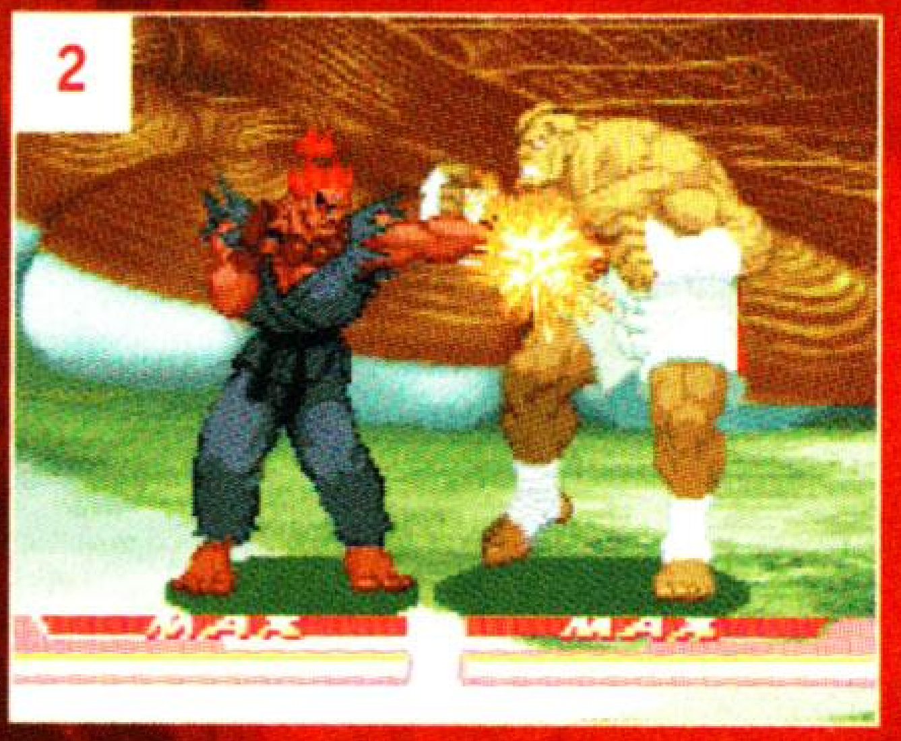

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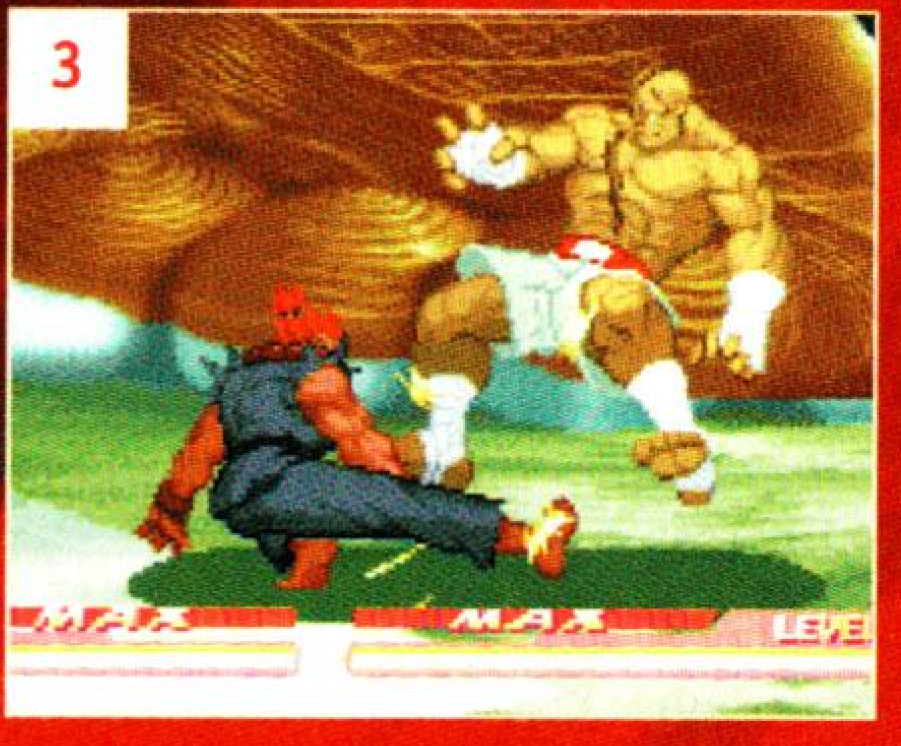


SYMBOLIC VICTORY

Also new to Street Fighter Alpha are the various symbols that accompany a bout victory. These are: P for perfect, V for ordinary win, S for victory by Special Move, S* for victory by Super Combo, a lasso for victory by throw (cheap!), an hour glass for a time-out victory, and finally a piece of cheese (!) for defeating a blocking opponent with no energy by special move (cheesy!). Of course, these symbols can be combined. Players who win with a lot of S* cheese should be duly taken outside and roughed up!

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Continuing in the pointless tradition of past Street Fighter games, Street Fighter Alpha is yet another victim of international name swapping. So while Street Fighter Zero contains Nash, Gouki and Vega, Street Fighter Alpha contains Charlie, Akuma and M Bison respectively. Interesting eh?

2. INTERMEDIATE DEFENCE

Akuma's Alpha Counter is performed with a kick, and hits low, therefore making it impractical against aerial attacks. Akuma's many defensive moves (teleport, roll) make him great at getting out of tight spots, and thus controlling the pace of the fight. Practice aerial blocking by jumping towards an opponent and not attacking. Just let him counter and see what moves go through your guard (Ryu and Kens' dragon punch for example). Akuma can counter throw with either fierce or roundhouse.

STEP 3: ADVANCED

1. ADVANCED OFFENCE

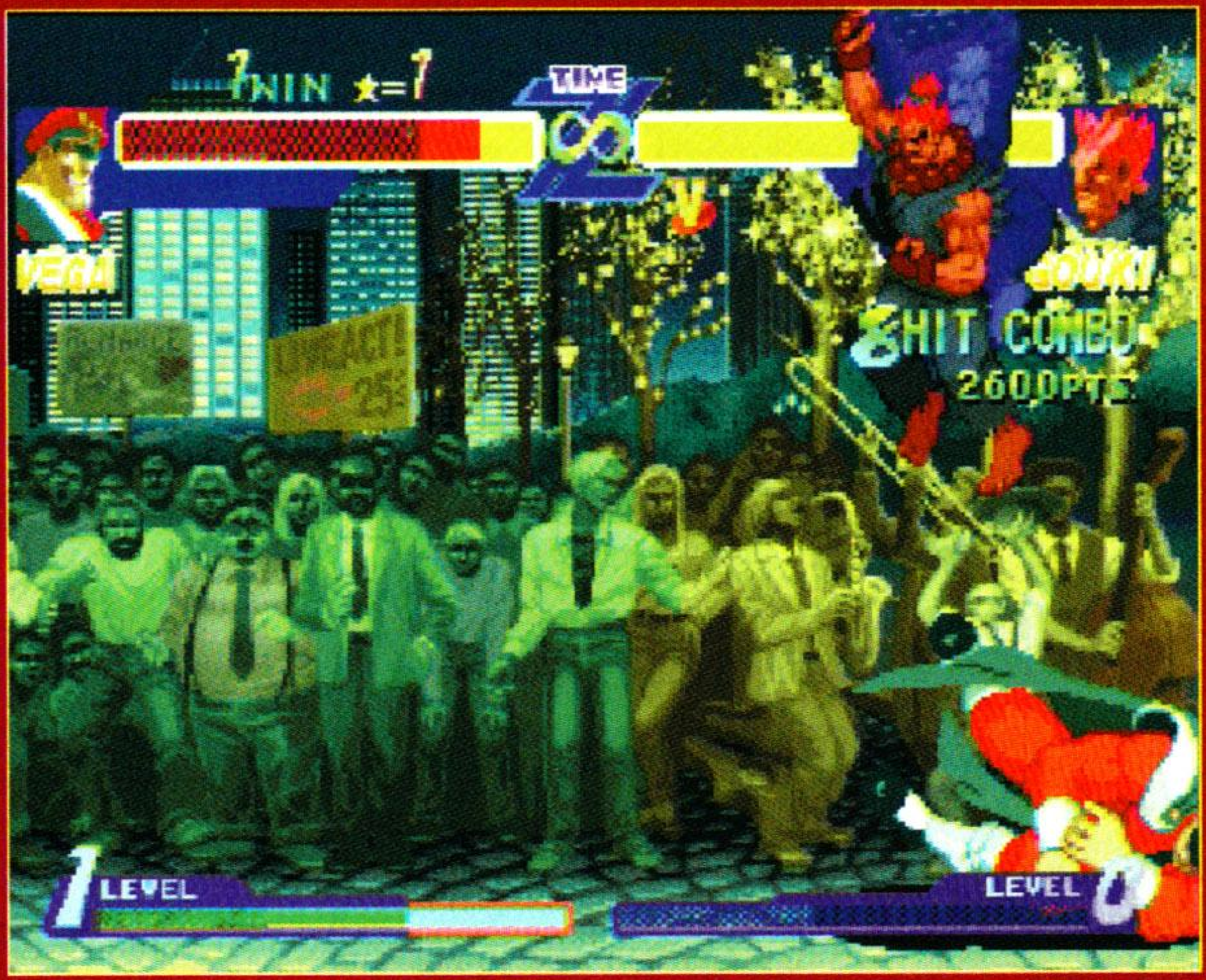
Make full use of Akuma's two overhead attacks (toward and strong or forward) to pass over a crouching opponents guard. They cannot be combined for combos so employ a hit and run tactic when using them. You may also want to start experimenting with his rolling attacks, though to be honest, they are difficult to perform and we haven't found much use for them.

Akuma has four Super Combos, more than any other character in Street Fighter Alpha. He has a super fireball similar to Ryu's, (though it's damn hard to pull off consistently) and a super dragon punch similar to Ken's. His super dragon punch has a large horizontal range and can be used on its own as a basic offensive move to pass through projectile attacks and strike the thrower. On top of that he has a super aerial fireball that works particularly well against CPU controlled opponents. If you want to get any of these super moves into combos you're going to need to master the buffering technique, so it's back to the training mode for some serious practice. Once you've perfected that, have a shot at these debilitating super-combos.

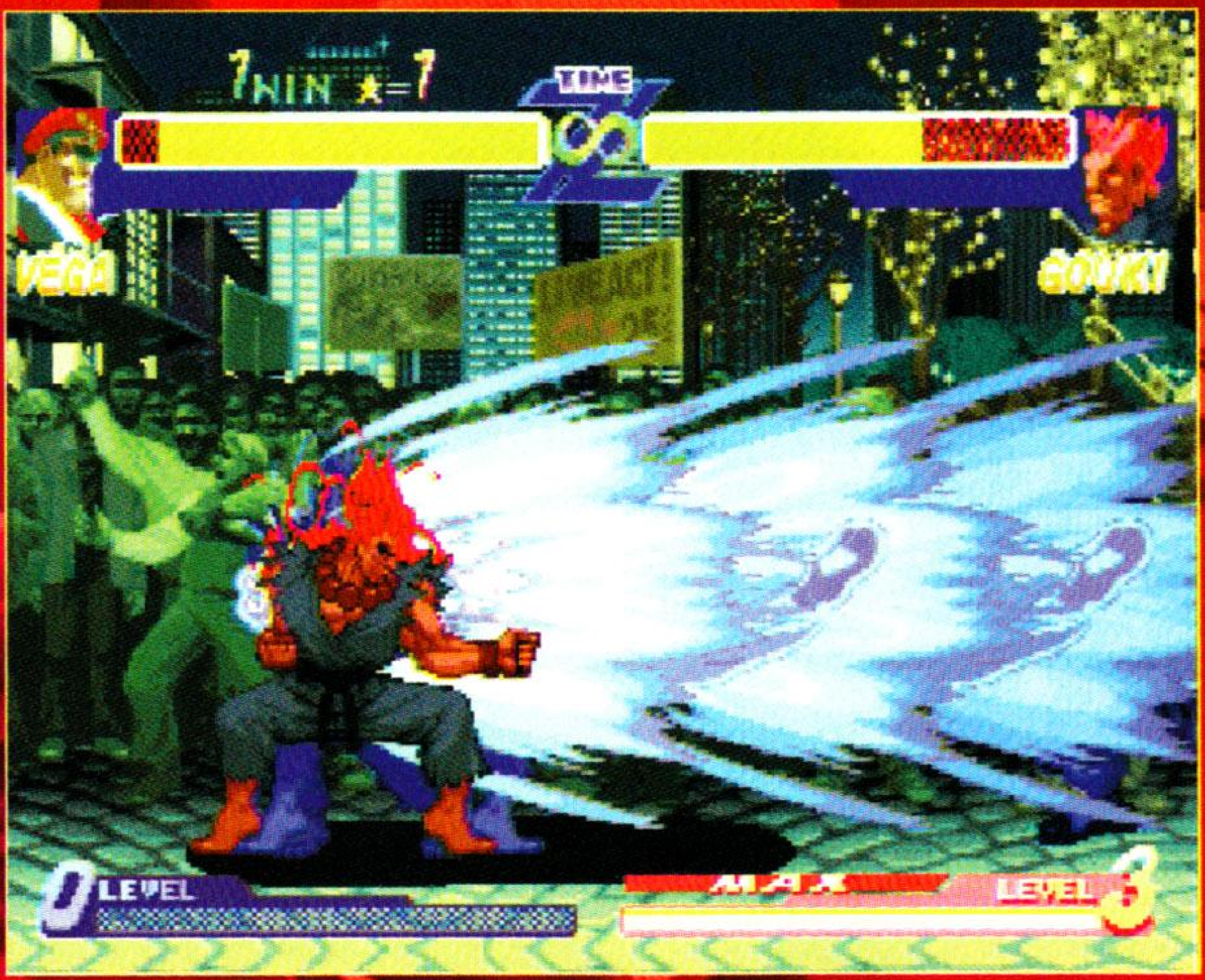
1. Jab aerial fireball, crouching short-short hurricane kick two-in-one, super dragon punch (to nail them on the juggle).

2. Jumping fierce, jab, jab, fierce-super fireball two-in-one.

If you can pull these off consistently you're well on your way to becoming a master! Akuma's final Super Combo, the hellish death strike, is VERY hard to perform consistently and requires a FULL Super Combo bar to work. It can also be stopped by and other attack, so it's a bit of risk. Make sure you know what you're doing before you waste a level three Super Combo on it.



Akuma takes on M Bison in a most dramatic battle indeed. An excellent eight-hit combo slams into the master of darkness, almost taking out the remainder of his energy bar.



Akuma's teleportation move comes in handy... Here, the mysterious fighter is preparing to disappear just as Bison unleashes his devastating level three Psycho Crusher Super Combo finish!

1. ADVANCED DEFENCE

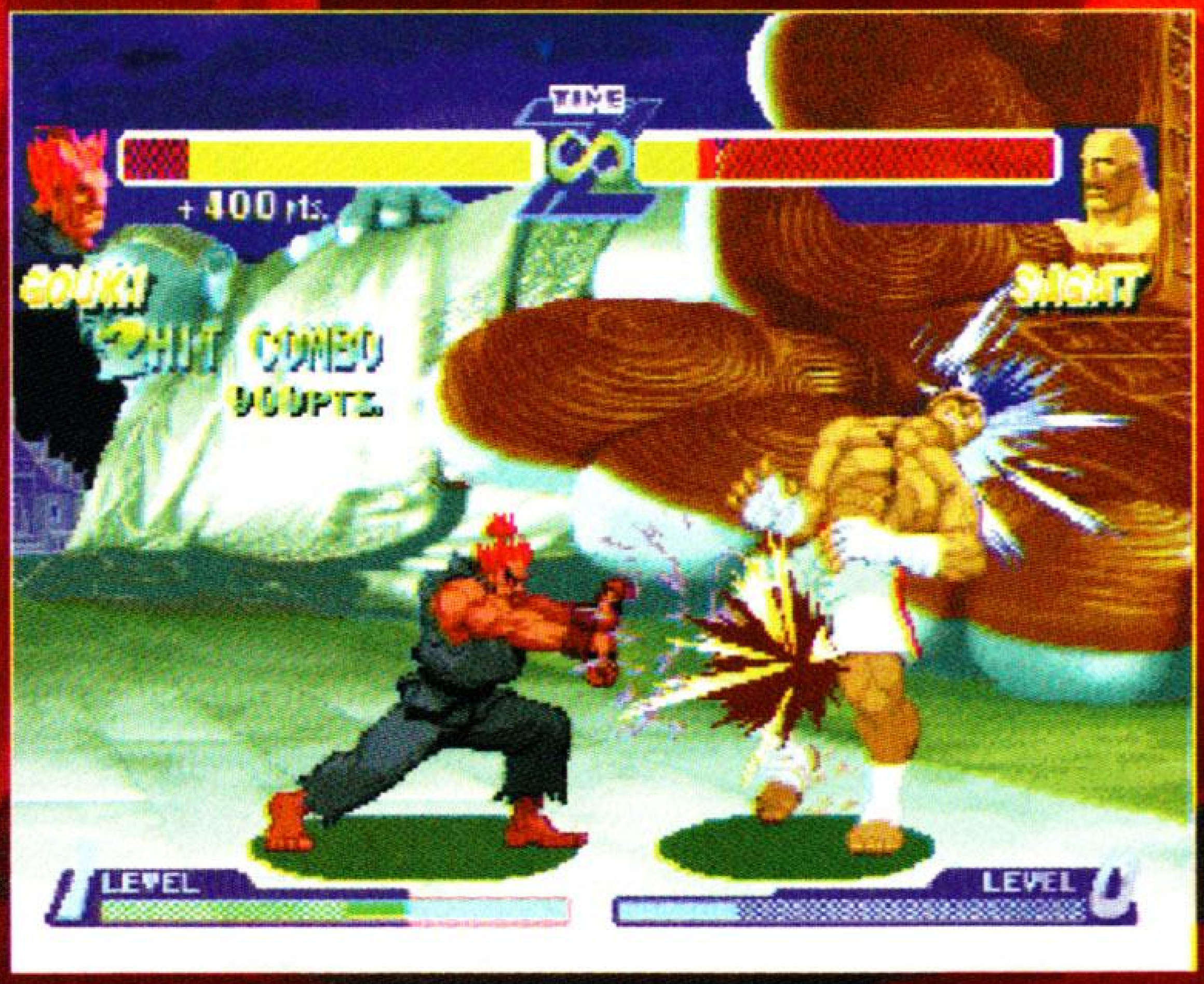
You can really surprise an attacker with a well timed dragon punch as you get up off the floor but this requires absolute pixel perfect timing. Until you learn to gauge your opponents pin, it's safer to block as you get up, but once you do you're into the 50/50 game of whether you should block high to counter the overhead strike, or block low to counter the sweep. The only way of knowing for sure is to be able to predict your opponent. See what he goes for most of the time, and you'll narrow down those odds.

AKUMA STRATEGIES

Now you've played with Akuma you'll know what type of fighter he is, and what strategies you'll need to employ. He's powerful, flexible and balanced, but a total wimp when it comes to taking damage. Akuma's stamina is poor, and a couple of well timed Super Combos spell Game Over for the great pony-tailed one. Fortunately, to counter this Akuma has a large number of defensive moves, and a good player will know how to use these to keep their opponent at a distance while they pummel them with projectiles.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

It's a sad fact, but in the end it's down to you. To get good at Street Fighter Alpha with any particular character, you need to play it, a lot. It also helps if you can play against other human opponents, as even with the revised AI of Street Fighter Alpha, fighting the CPU tends to become a predictable and frustrating affair. The steps we have described above for learning Akuma will work with any fighter, though they may require completely different strategies and playing styles. When you think you've mastered Akuma, move on to your next choice! There's 12 more to master before you can consider yourself a Street Fighter Alpha expert.



LET'S GET ZEN!

Once you've perfected all the techniques we've detailed over the past few pages, and can perform the necessary moves and actions consistently (which, we might add, you WON'T be doing in any hurry on an official PlayStation pad), it's time to take your fighting to the 'next level'. At its purest form, Street Fighter Alpha is a battle of the minds. Both you and your opponent know what your respective characters are capable of, so your best weapon is always going to be your ability to predict what's coming next. If you play against the same opponent for a long period of time, particularly the CPU, you will eventually spot certain predetermined patterns or combinations of attacks that they like to use. If you can see these patterns coming, you can use the appropriate counter to stay ahead!

THE MAXIMUM STREET FIGHTER ALPHA R&D INTERVIEW

6500
TIME
11300
+300 pts.
RYU KEN
VEGA
5HIT COMBO
1300PTS.
LEVEL
LEVEL 2

At the tail end of November, 1995, **MAXIMUM** visited the Japanese headquarters of Capcom to check out R&D work on forthcoming products such as X-Men: Children of the Atom, Resident Evil, DarkStalkers and of course, Street Fighter Alpha. We spoke to Mr Tatsuya Minami, Senior Manager of the Product Planning and Design section of the Consumer Game Department about the development of this latest Street Fighting instalment.

We also discussed the future of the hyper-successful Street Fighter franchise - details of which you'll find at the end of the interview. What was fascinating was the collaboration taking place between Capcom and other arcade houses who specialise in 3D games. Most exciting of all is the news that Capcom are talking to Sega - the masters of arcade 3D, about a potential sharing of ideas for Street Fighter 3...

Still, enough of the future and conjecture. On with the Capcom R&D Street Fighter Alpha inquisition...

> "WE DIDN'T HAVE PROBLEMS TRANSLATING ANYTHING WITH STREET FIGHTER ALPHA - EVERYTHING FROM THE ARCADE MACHINE WAS INCLUDED IN THE FINAL GAME."

16400
TIME
16900
RYU KEN
VEGA
LEVEL
MAX
LEVEL 3

2700
TIME
4800
+500 pts.
RYU KEN
VEGA
6HIT COMBO
2100PTS.
LEVEL
LEVEL 2

MAXIMUM Which team was responsible for converting Street Fighter Alpha and what games have they programmed before?

Mr Minami There are different tasks assigned to each team, but the main programmer has consistently worked on home versions of Street Fighter.

MAXIMUM Did he work on the arcade versions as well?

Mr Minami No - just the home versions, although all information is shared with the arcade team - coin-op source code was used.

MAXIMUM When you say that you used arcade source code, does this mean that when you designed the CPS-II you had the home systems in mind in order to make easier conversions?

Mr Minami No, when the CPS-II system was originally developed, the only home system we supported at the time was the 8-bit NES. However, Alpha had relatively little character [animation] data, so transferring it to Saturn and PlayStation was pretty easy.

MAXIMUM Does the CPS-II architecture have any similarities with the internals of the Saturn or PlayStation?

Mr Minami No. The CPUs between the systems are different, but we use C as a common assembly language.

MAXIMUM So plenty of code is easily portable between the systems...?

Mr Minami Yes. If, for example, we're making a Saturn conversion of the same game, the translation is a lot easier if the same language is used.

MAXIMUM Is there common source code between Street Fighter Alpha, DalkStalkers and X-Men?

Mr Minami Although conceptually they are similar games, the actual code is completely different for each game.

MAXIMUM Why did you choose to back in Capcom history and bring back the two Final Fight characters Guy and Sodom?

Mr Minami They were popular. Final Fight is basically an action game with one-on-one combat games being quite different. They were easy characters to use and Guy in particular was a favourite as he is a kind of ninja. Sodom was also popular due to his colourful techniques.

MAXIMUM It would have been a lot easier for him if he'd brought his swords along this time...

Mr Minami Sodom can use his hands and doesn't just depend on his weaponry.

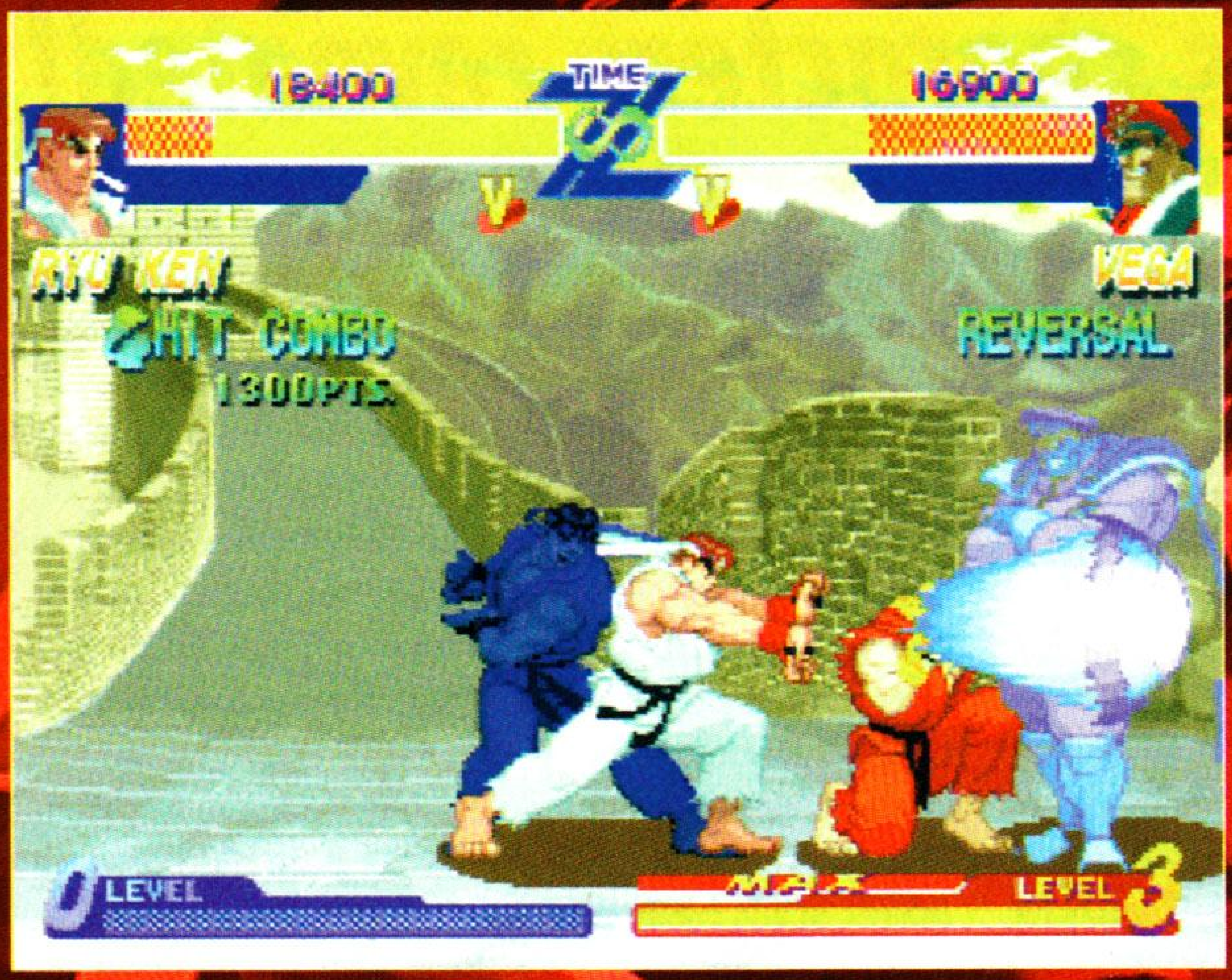
MAXIMUM Are there any other Capcom games you considered using characters from?

Mr Minami No, there were no other characters in mind with respect to Alpha. We had some characters, such as Nash, who were from the backbone of the Street Fighter story.

MAXIMUM Why was Nash's name changed to Charlie in the US and European versions?

Mr Minami That was an operational decision [dependent on

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA WARRIORS' DREAMS



> *"IT IS TRUE THAT THE LIFESPAN OF COIN-OPS IS GETTING SHORTER, BUT THE SUITABILITY OF CONVERTING A GAME HAS AN EFFECT... STREET FIGHTER ALPHA WAS A LOT EASIER TO CONVERT THAN X-MEN."*

the relevant Capcom territory]. We didn't really have strong feelings about this.

MAXIMUM Capcom games have the most precise gameplay mechanics. Is it difficult to convert across every single combo and how much time do you spend playtesting the conversion to make sure that you're replicated everything from the arcade version?
Mr Minami It is very difficult to convert across all of the techniques perfectly, but even if the conversion isn't exactly the same, we put all of the techniques in. So even if the animation on the characters has been cut down, it will stay play identically.

MAXIMUM How common is it for someone in the arcades to discover a technique or combination that you yourself don't know about? Does that happen often?
Mr Minami Right through from Street Fighter II to Street Fighter Alpha this has happened, but users get a lot of enjoyment out of making such discoveries.

MAXIMUM How do you come up with new combination ideas? Do you get any input from arcade players?
Mr Minami Our project team takes over here, each taking charge of a particular character and discussing their movements.

MAXIMUM It has to be said that the Sony pads just aren't built for Capcom fighting games - the d-pad is horrendous and the buttons aren't in the right places. Do you have any plans for producing your own pads, as you did with the Megadrive and Super NES?
Mr Minami Personally, I'm not sure there's that much of a problem with the pad, but Capcom currently has no plans to market any pads, although since we have had some experience of making them for other systems it remains a future possibility.

MAXIMUM Were any specific fighters more difficult than others to translate into the home versions?
Mr Minami We didn't have any problems translating anything with Street Fighter Alpha - everything from the arcade machine was included in the final game.

MAXIMUM Have you included everything from the coin-op - all of the secret characters, for example?
Mr Minami This time we had a policy of producing a complete translation, which is something that we had not done before - so you bring out the secrets in much the same way.

MAXIMUM Is there much to tell the Saturn and PlayStation versions apart?
Mr Minami No.

MAXIMUM What's next for the team now that Street Fighter Alpha is complete?
Mr Minami We'll probably be taking a break...

MAXIMUM Street Fighter Alpha went back to a time before the Street Fighter II series. Where do you think Capcom will go from this point onwards - will you remain in this past timeline or go into the future? What plans do you have for Street Fighter III?
Mr Minami There are great expectations for Street Fighter III and we certainly feel the pressure. In fact, to be honest, we really don't want to do it. We produced the animated movie and there is no doubt that Alpha is based at the historical background shown there. It's not that we aren't going to produce it - we just have to be *really* careful.

MAXIMUM Most companies wait up until a year after the coin-op was released before publishing the home conversions. However, Street Fighter Alpha has been released very quickly - do you think that arcade machines have shorter lifespans nowadays?
Mr Minami As you say, it is true that the lifespan of coin-ops is getting shorter, but the suitability of converting a game does have an effect. Due to the level of character data involved, Street Fighter Alpha was a lot easier to convert than X-Men.

MAXIMUM Why do you think that coin-op lifespans are getting shorter?
Mr Minami Currently most of the top arcade games are 3D, like Virtua Cop and Virtua Fighter. Once the conversion has been made, an arcade sequel is easy, so we see new games coming out one after another. I think this is one reason why the lifespans are decreasing, but this is my personal view.

MAXIMUM But Virtua Fighter 2.1 came out a whole year after the version 2.0. Why the delay there?
Mr Minami This probably because Sega had not built its know-how up fully. From what I understand, when Virtua Cop was made it took a lot of time and people, but the sequel was done with just seven people and took just six months. This is probably the trend in arcade development now.

MAXIMUM Does this mean it's harder to produce 2D games like Street Fighter Alpha than 3D ones?
Mr Minami Yes that's right - it's very hard. We're experienced with 2D games now and we're building up our expertise with 3D coin-ops.

MAXIMUM Will Street Fighter III be 3D?
Mr Minami It's part of the concept, but with 3D there will be certain losses, so we have to think about it carefully.

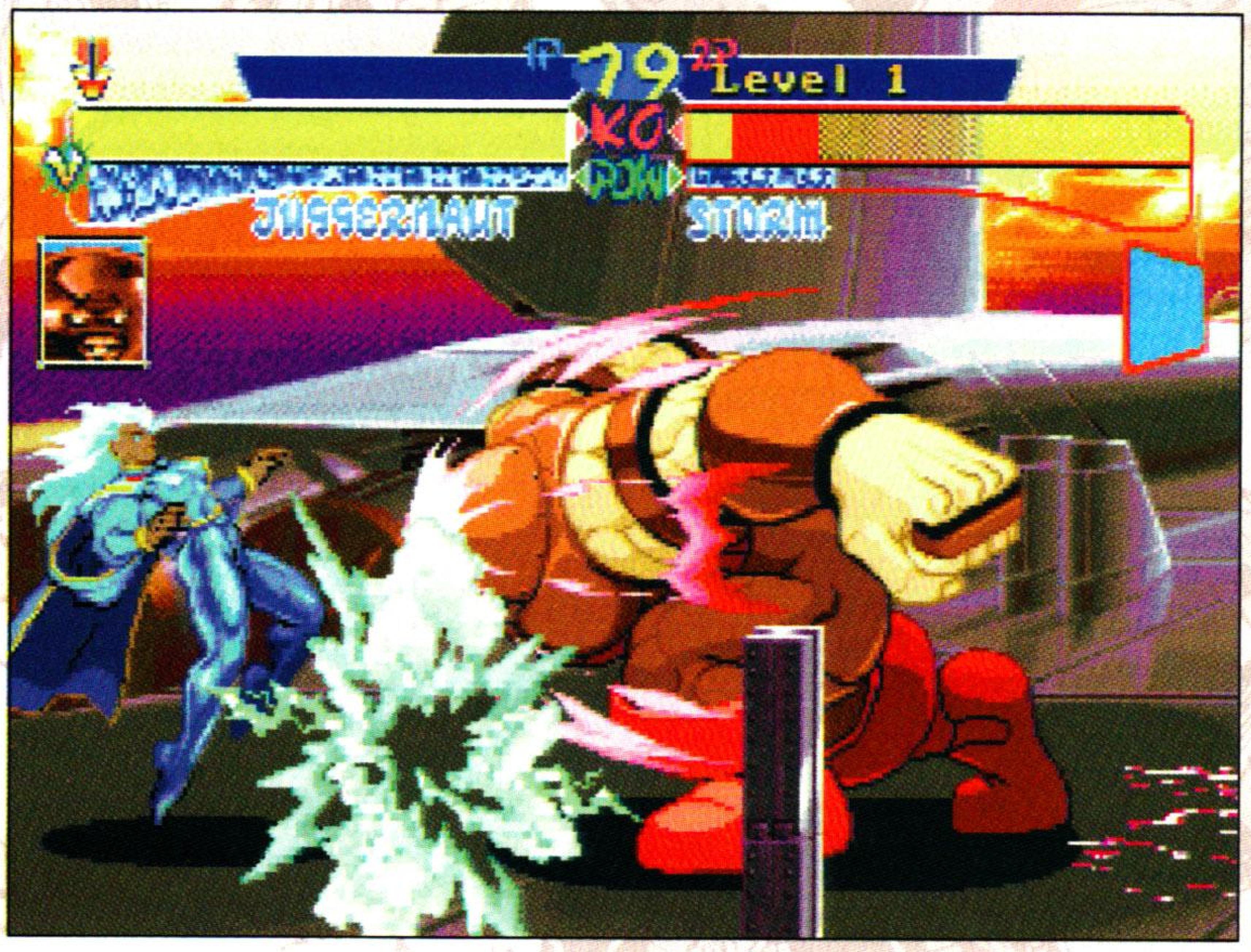
MAXIMUM Will your next fighting game be 3D regardless of whether it is Street Fighter or not?
Mr Minami We are already considering it and have a number of ideas although these are not limited to just Street Fighter.

MAXIMUM How keen are Capcom fans for you to produce a 3D game? Do you get a lot of response from your players?
Mr Minami I don't think the players have a particular preference for 3D over 2D. They respond well to one-on-one fighting games, and we hope to do more of these in 3D in the future.

> *"I DON'T THINK THE PLAYERS HAVE A PARTICULAR PREFERENCE FOR 3D OVER 2D - THEY RESPOND WELL TO ONE-ON-ONE FIGHTING GAMES AND WE HOPE TO DO MORE OF THESE IN 3D IN THE FUTURE."*

X-MEN: CHILDREN OF THE ATOM

First of the mutant boss characters revealed!



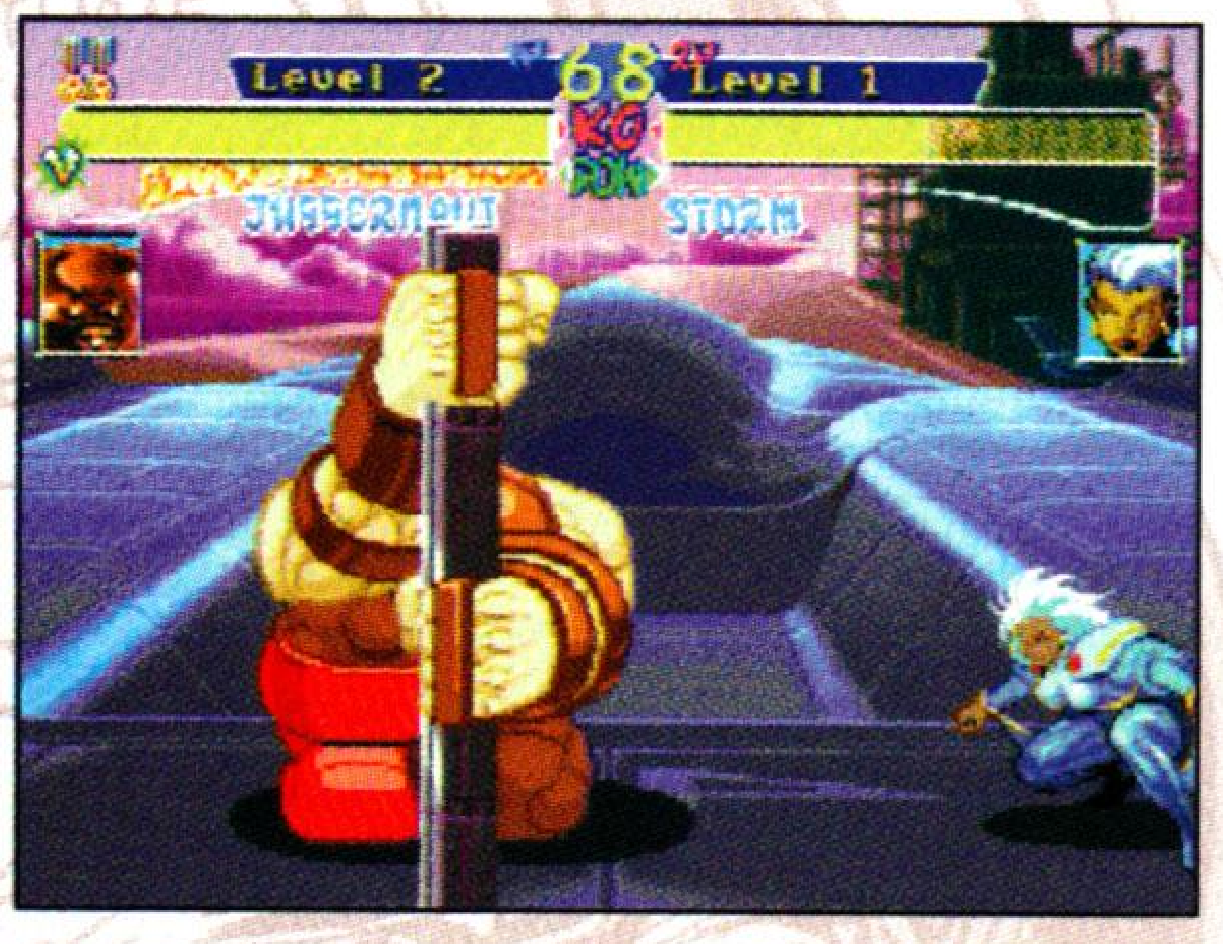
This enormous character was one of the very first X-Men villains, having made his debut in the first 12 months of the sixties run of the comics series. Cain Marko is Professor Xavier's half-brother, who bears a huge prejudice against his sibling. Being that Xavier is the most powerful mutant mind on Earth (allegedly), there was nothing Cain could do to gain his revenge until he seized the crimson ruby of Cytorrak. This transformed him into Juggernaut - one of the most powerful, invulnerable super-villains in the Marvel Universe.

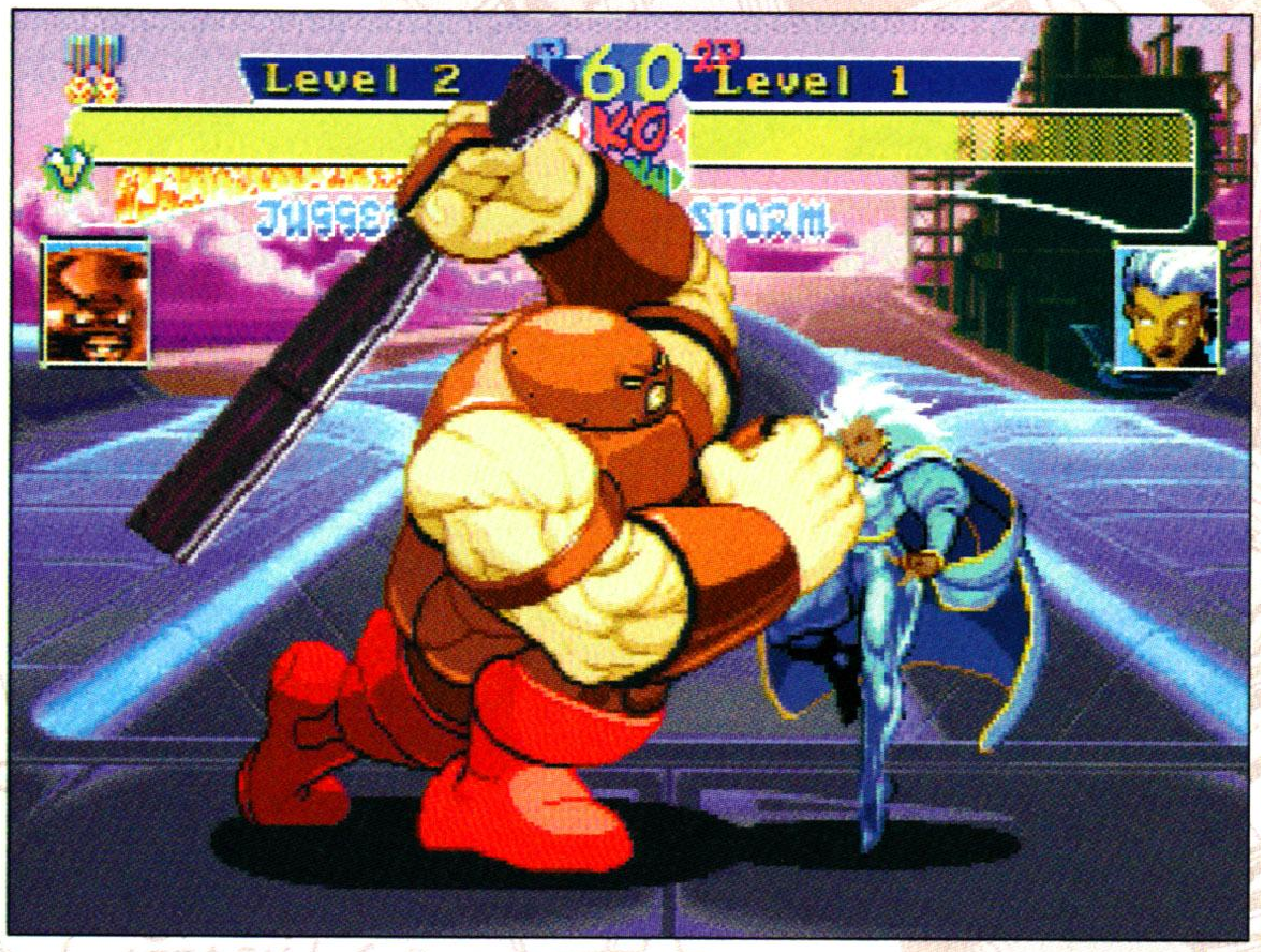
Even for a boss character, Juggernaut is frighteningly powerful, specialising in the pure bludgeoning power of his basic attacks. One punch is enough to drain huge amounts from the energy bar, whilst special moves such as the Earthquake and the Juggernaut Punch are life-threateningly damaging. He can take a huge amount of punishment, and although he can be stunned (with a huge amount of effort), he cannot be knocked down.

A player controlled Juggernaut is a most frightening prospect in any Versus Battle - however, a good choice of character (long-range fighters such as Iceman and Cyclops are good bets) combined with accomplished blocking can spell defeat for the large, brown one.

"THE FEEBLE TORNADOES OF STORM ARE NO MATCH FOR MY STRENGTH! I'M THE UNSTOPPABLE JUGGERNAUT!! HEAR ME ROAR!!"

Select Juggernaut and two iron poles tend to appear in the foreground - regardless of the stage chosen. Juggy is able to collect these poles by pressing down twice along with all three punch buttons. With the pole, Juggernaut can hit his opponent *anywhere* on screen, although all of his special moves are negated. When playing against Juggernaut, it's wise to note that he is quite vulnerable when collecting the pole. A good combination is enough to make him drop the pole as soon as he collects it.



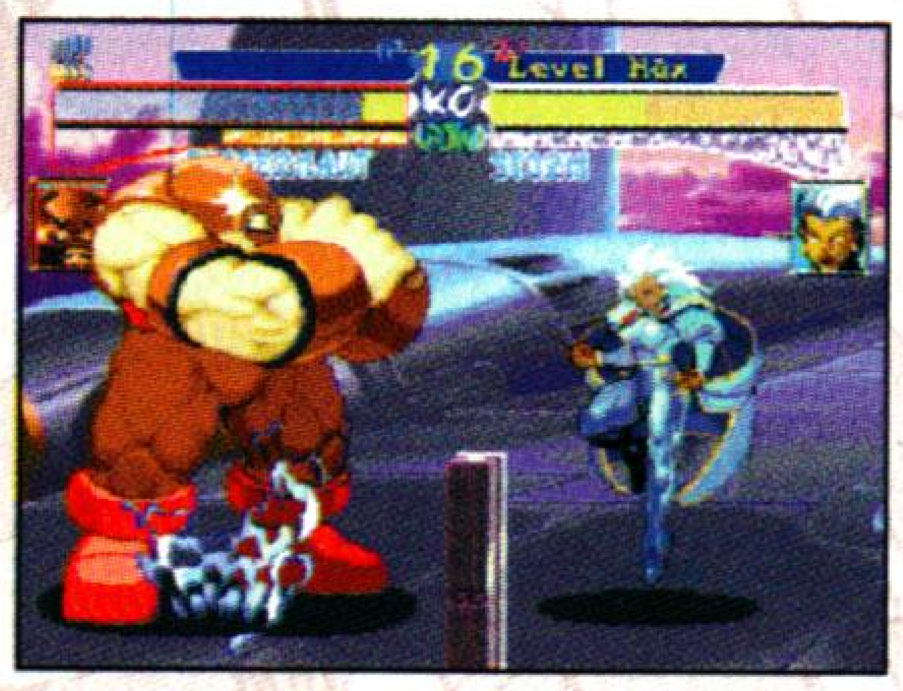


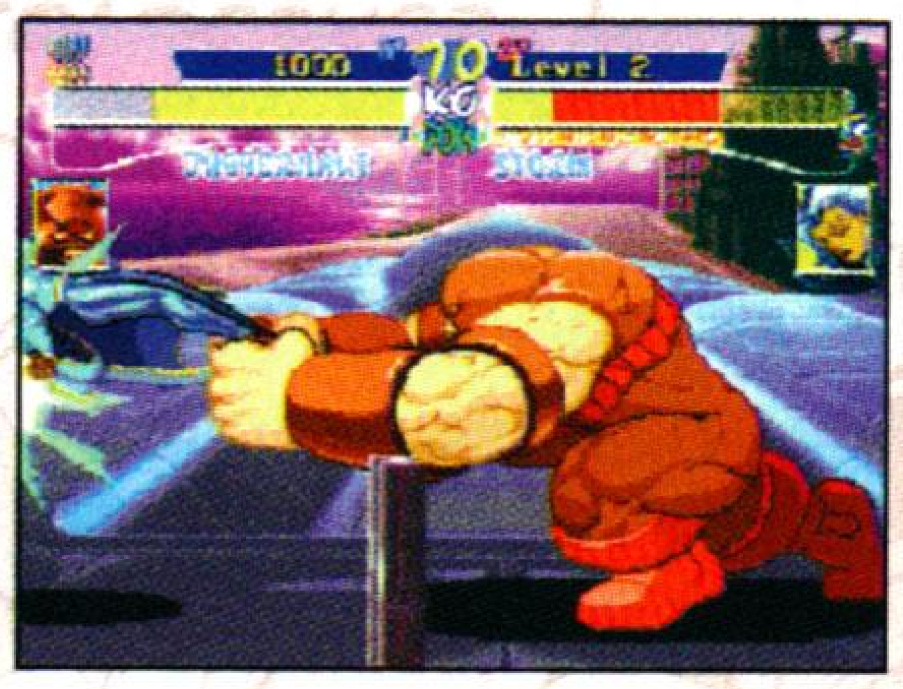
CONTROLLING THE JUGGERNAUT

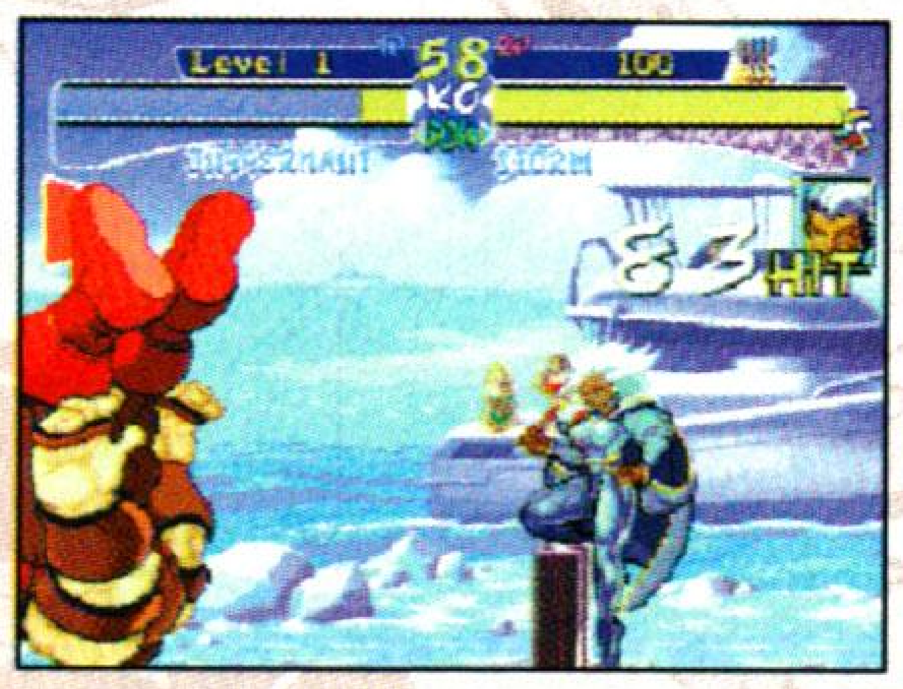
As revealed in **MAXIMUM** issue #3, the Juggernaut is only available for player control in the two-player Versus Mode. Enter the Akuma cheat and play one round. When you return to the Versus screen, you'll see that Akuma has no character portrait. From here press UP/LEFT twice. After the first press, you'll see Wolverine appear in the portrait slot, but the 1P/2P flashing icon won't be on-screen. At the second button press, Juggernaut's visage appears on-screen. Now just select as normal and the unstoppable might of the Exiles leader is yours!

THE CYTTORAK CURSE HAS CAUSED CAIN TO CRUSH AND CRUMBLE THE CRANIUMS OF HIS ENEMIES!

Juggernaut's mutant power level can be boosted by performing a reverse dragon movement with the punch button. As far as **MAXIMUM** is aware, this is an entirely new move never seen in X-Men or its arcade follow-up Marvel Super Heroes. It's not particularly useful since Juggernaut is left entirely defenceless for over a second, resulting in massive potential damage.

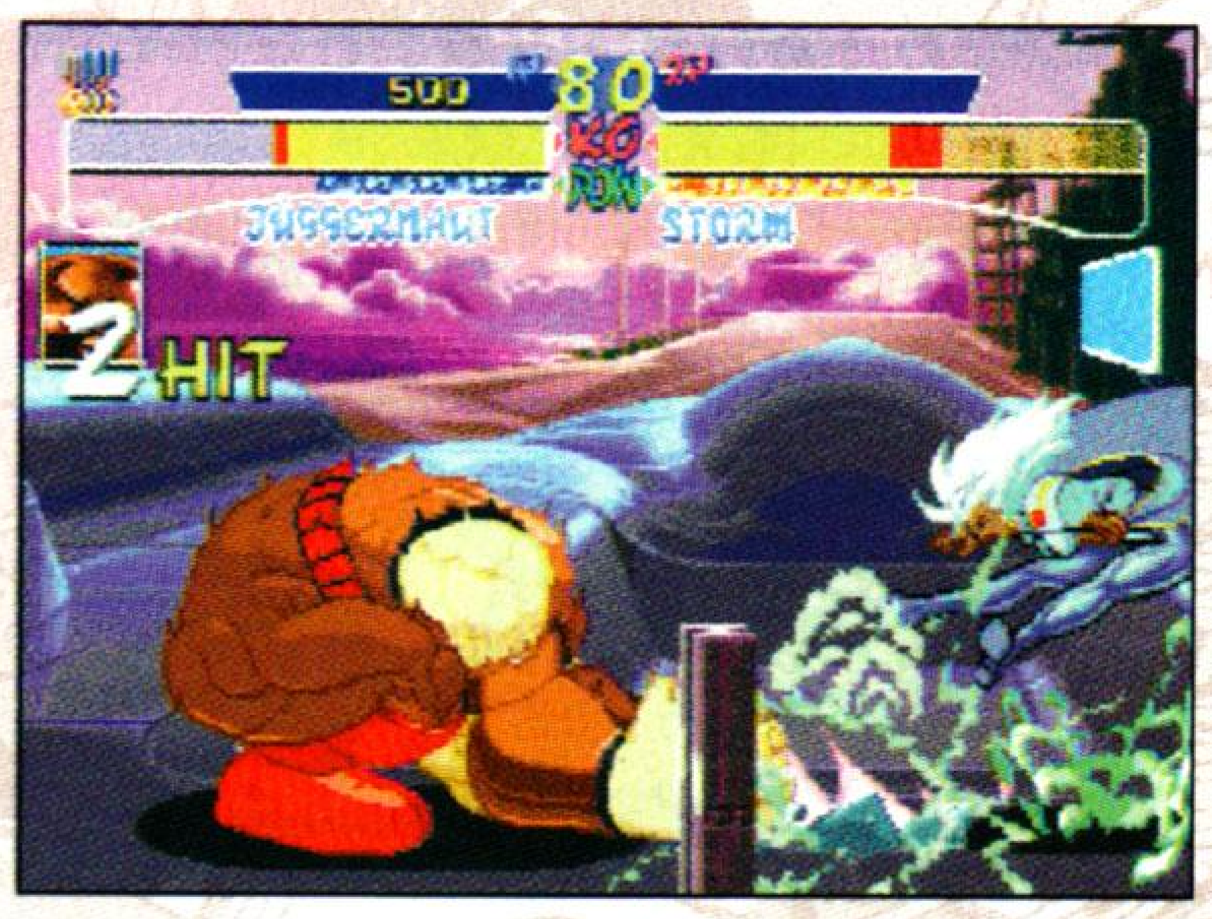






Officially, the largest possible combination is 80 hits, courtesy of Iceman. However, we found this super-crap 83 hit strike! Choose Juggernaut and Storm and go to Iceman's stage (essential, because the floor is more slippery). With Storm, just use crouching light kicks with Juggernaut in the corner. You should get around 25 hits before Juggy falls over. Then repeat the process for up to an 83 hit strike!

THE UNSTOPPABLE POWERS OF JUGGERNAUT	
SPECIAL TECHNIQUES	
EARTHQUAKE	→↘↓↙← + Any Punch button
JUGGERNAUT PUNCH	←↙↓↘→ + Any Punch button
CYTTORAK POWER-UP	↓↙← + Any Punch button
MAX LEVEL X-POWERS	
JUGGERNAUT HEADCRUSH	←↙↓↘→ + All three Punch buttons



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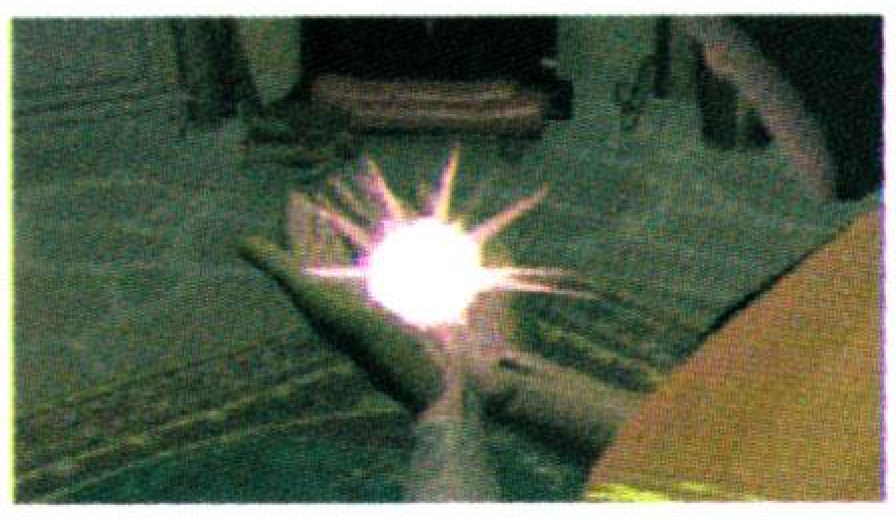


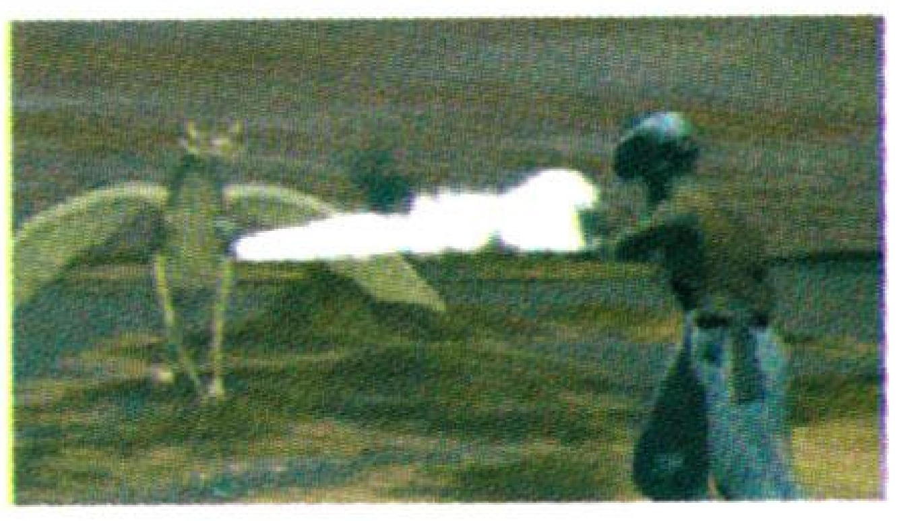
The Tome of Molenubar is and incredibly thick and dusty volume, and contains the history of your vast and troubled lands. You reach for the green leather book, brush off the cobwebs and open the first pages of parchment before sitting down to read. Your forthcoming task is going to be arduous and extremely difficult and you need more information regarding the reason for your summoning. You take a cane of incense, light it from the candle next to your shrine, and settle back to examine Molenubar's achievement.

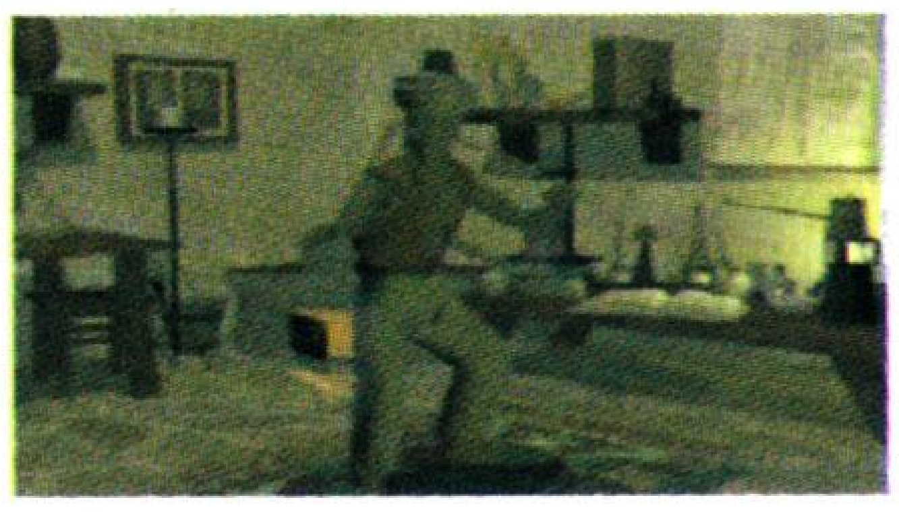
After a number of hours or intensive study, you realise the depth of knowledge contained in this tome. Molenubar was a respected and eminent historian with a particular knowledge of summoning rituals, and this great man spent his life uncovering pieces of patchment that detailed apocryphal tales of legendary battles. Molenubar worked during a time of warfare and turmoil, and placed all his findings in this book of myths. His writing sometimes becomes mad scrawls of squid ink on papyrus leaves, and there are many chapters that are simply too untidy to read at all. Molenubar was addicted to his work, visiting lands as far as Yoggohr and Hazzanjahn and working through the nights to complete his weighty volume. You feel all the more honoured to read this work when you remember that Molenubar was taken to the afterlife prematurely after the Old Gods realised how his work would affect the future of humankind. The tome was left unfinished.

You read on, aware that you hold in your hands the secret past of a land that has remained in the grip of fear for over 5000 years. Once you finish, you realise your mission, and vow to return the world to a balance of life and death. You feel suitably humbled after reading of the past titanic struggles for the land. The book tells you of the creation of the world by the Old Gods, and the inner power that they bottled inside every one of their creations. This powerful energy source was known as mana, and those who studied the death process realised that mana was forming after a death occurred. Through various means, some sorcerors began to harness this power from within the population, and amazed such folk with fantastic spells and abilities whilst employing further (and sometimes nefarious) techniques to gain even more mana. These sorcerors became increasingly powerful, and wizards began to hide themselves away, fearful that their colleagues would take their secrets for their own ends. Previous friendships developed into bitter disputes, and more powerful magicians began to dabble in the black arts in order to gain the upper hand. All these power struggles ended abruptly in what came to be known as the Mighty Cataclysm, when the whole world was torn apart by a monumental earthquake, summoned by a terribly foolish wizard.

The last chapter of the volumous work details a pact signed by an apprentice wizard, who was forced to restore the realm of life to equilibrium. Molenubar tells of a battle that this apprentice fought with a mighty wyvern in the mountainous district of Moorrok province in vivid detail, but leaves the ending unfinished. All that you were able to gleam from your reading was that this apprentice was a grandmaster in airborne carpet manipulation skills, and that his rug was obedient to his every command. You close the book, and place it in the furthest corner of your master's library. It has fallen to you to restore the lands to their former glory and complete the chronicle of the wizards. Your magic carpet is waiting, hovering in the early morning sun. Take to the skies and commence the ride of your life!

The world has been ravaged by warfare between rival wizards!



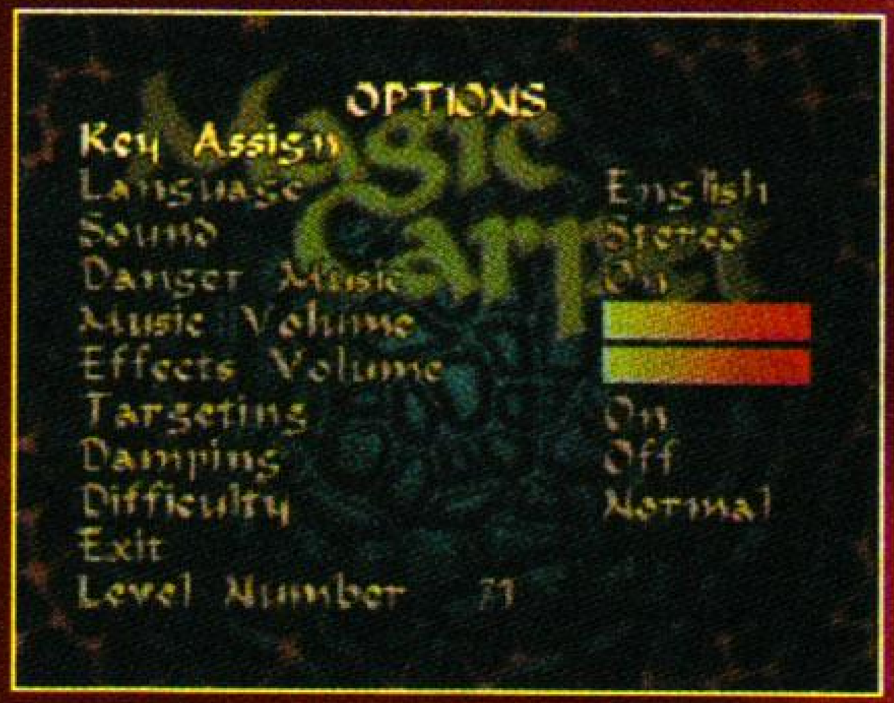


FREE THE 75 WORLDS FROM THE FIERCE FIGHTING THAT IS RAGING!

There are 50 initial worlds that cry out for your attention, and all must be restored before you move to the ice worlds hidden deep in the northern tundra. You must fly about these shattered realms, collecting mana ball after mana ball before the world can be restored. The mana you collect comes from three different sources. Firstly, it can be found floating freely in the valleys or the seas of a particular realm, otherwise it is contained in the spirit of a monstrous creature that must be destroyed in order to free it. Finally, rival wizards of immense power are at work, building up their own supply of mana, and this must be taken from their evil grasp if goodness is to triumph. Once a mana ball is changed to your colour, a balloon is dispatched to collect the item, before the inflated carriage returns to deposit the ball into your mana store, or castle.

Collecting mana is not the only factor to overcome. There are numerous fantastic beasts to slay, and they will attack you and your fortress from the sky and the ground. Your rivals have been struck down under an evil influence, and seek to destroy you when they feel the time is right. Judge their actions and act without mercy, for the sake of all humanity. The castle holds your lifeforce and must be defended to the hilt, for a castle that is destroyed leave a wizard open to magical attacks resulting in a permanent death. This might all sound too much for you to bear, but fear not, as there are many spells concealed throughout the lands that shall empower you with abilities you only dreamed of. Gather them all and fare ye well. Fly your carpet proficiently, o initiate, and rout this evil away from the realm of goodness forever!

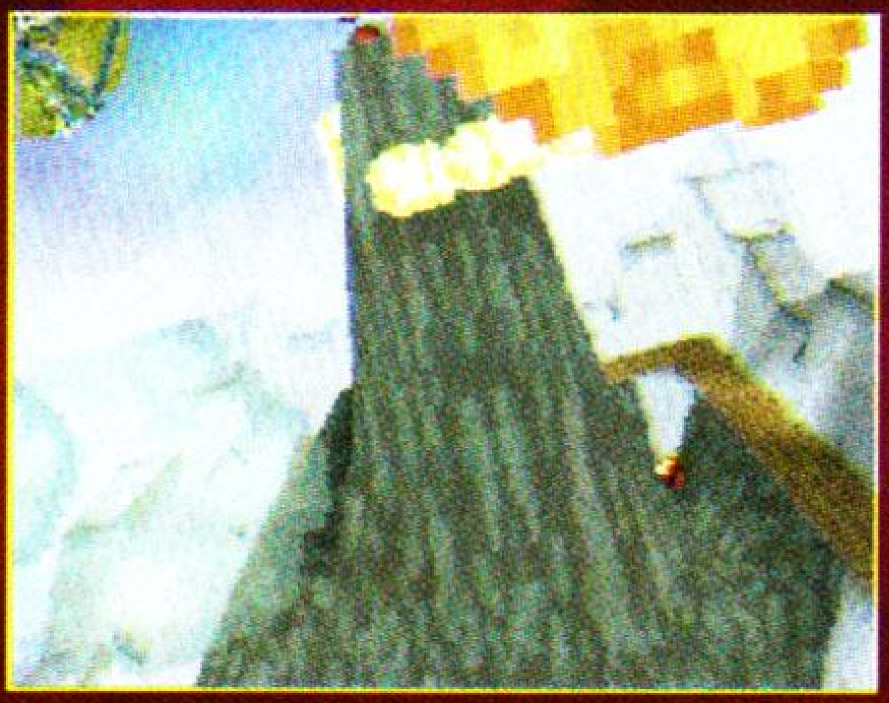
Magic Carpet
Start New Game
Continue Game
Load Game
Options


OPTIONS
Key Assign
Language English
Sound Stereo
Danger Music On
Music Volume
Effects Volume
Targeting On
Damping Off
Difficulty Normal
Exit
Level Number 71

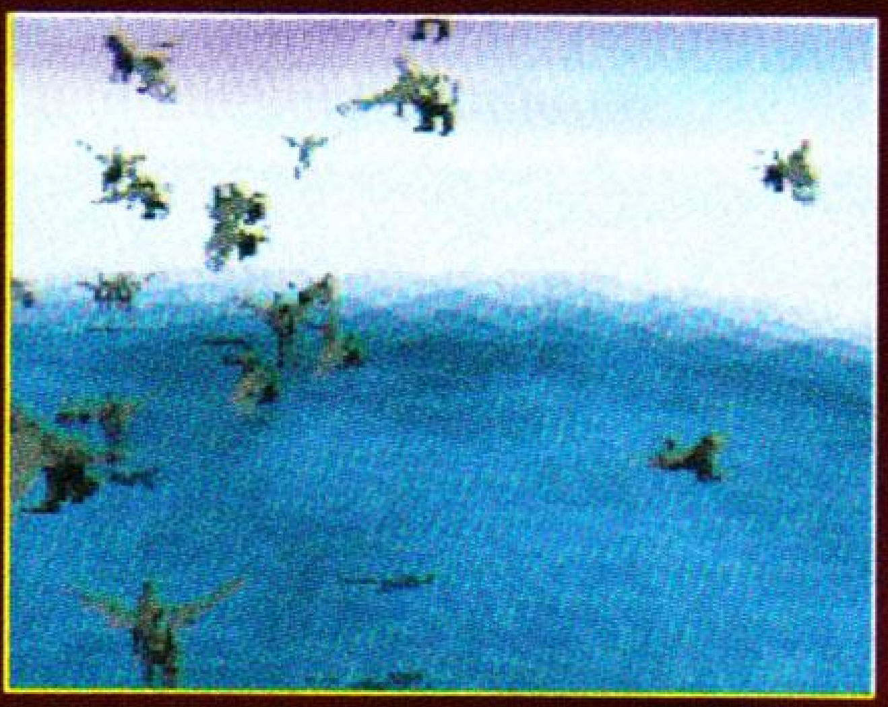
After a couple of uninspiring console titles under their belt, Bullfrog have finally released a game that wowed the *MAXIMUM* team this month. We had known that Magic Carpet would be making an appearance on both the PlayStation and Saturn for a while now, but we weren't prepared for the graphical feast and increased playability of the titles. We are pleased to announce that both the Saturn and PlayStation versions are of the same high standard as the PC original, but both are blessed with an improved control system due to the intuitive joypad control, and a greater number of levels. Console owners will benefit from a total of 75(!) realms to fly through, as Bullfrog have thoughtfully included all the Hidden Worlds of the PC expansion disc (and the extra spell - the homing meteor).

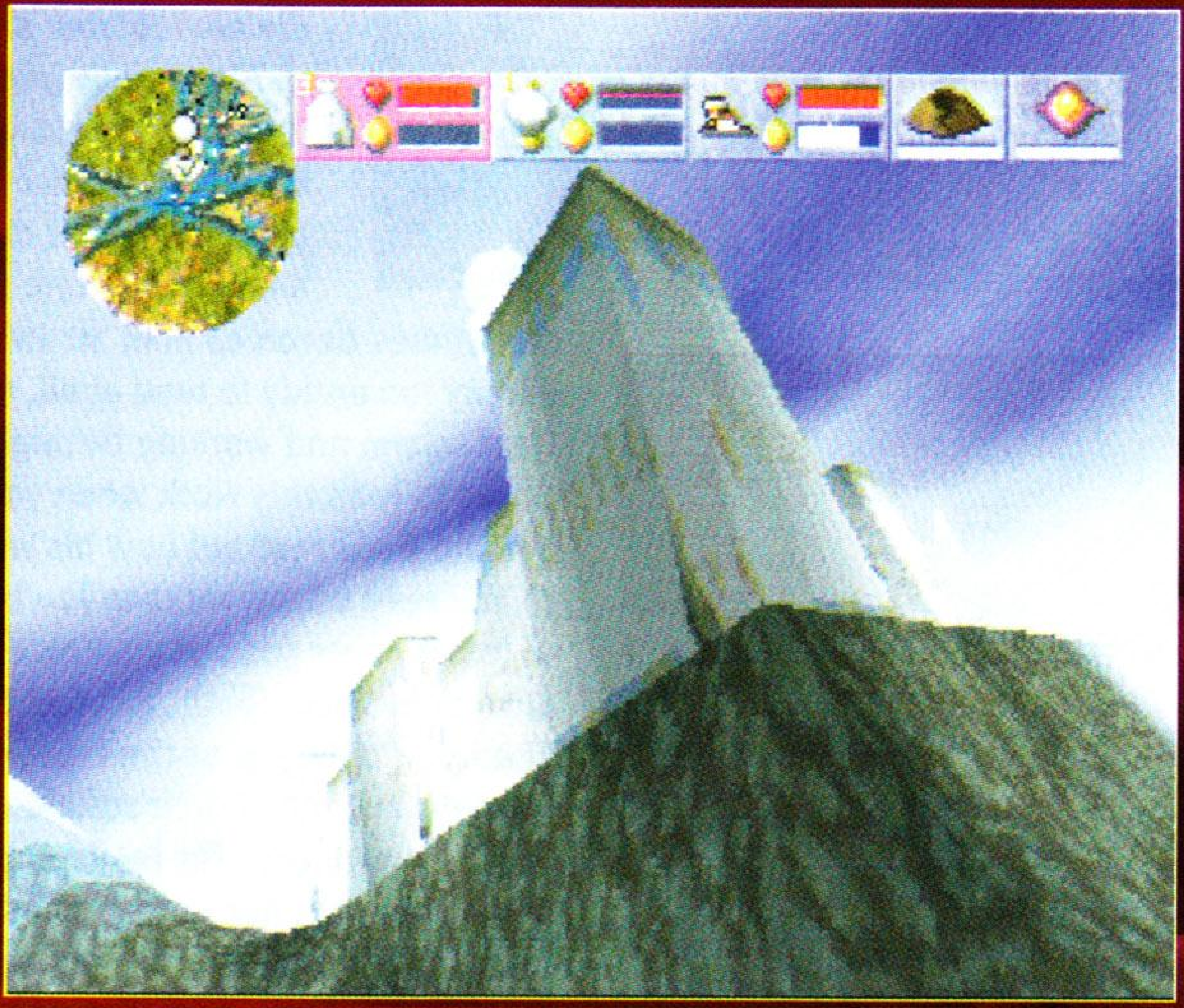
Having been the first to receive a finished copy of the PlayStation conversion (all screenshots are taken from this version as it features a greater use of colour), we played this game thoroughly for hours, and were still unable to put it down. Our extensive playtest enabled the **MAXIMUM** team to formulate a number of interesting features that you may employ when this game gets an official UK release on March 25. Look for a review in issue 5, but for the moment feast your eyes on this mammoth gameplay guide...

A plethora of awesome camera angles makes Magic Carpet one of the most visually impressive games ever seen. Journey through strange lands inhabited by odd creatures (below left) and cast magic spells (below)!



Learn initial RUG CONTROL with our basic guide!



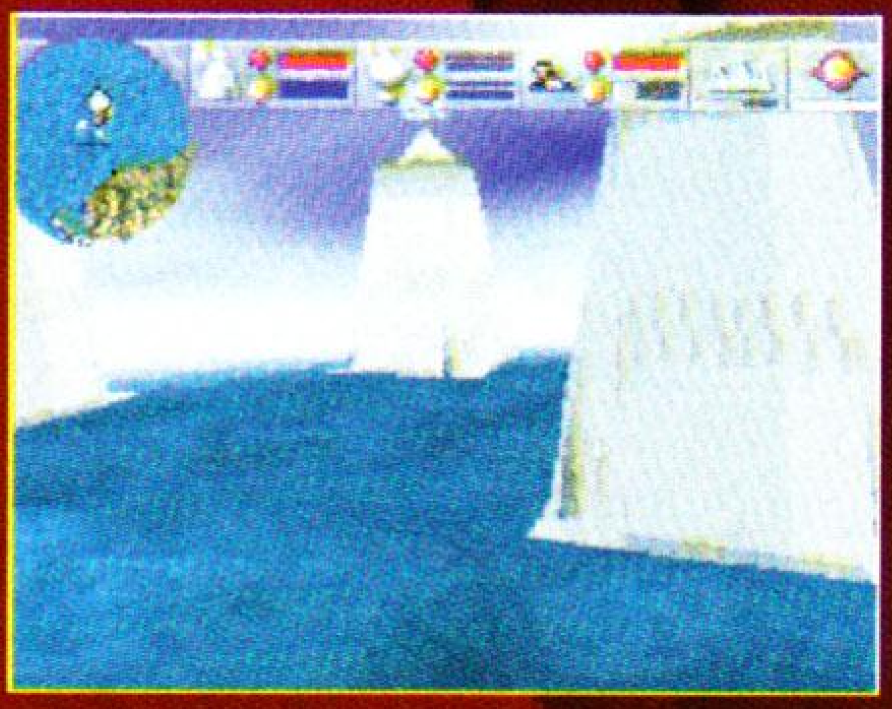


ENTER THE SORCEROR'S CHAMBER!

Once you've finished viewing the excellent rendered introduction (and finally remembering that the narrator is in fact Treguard from 'Knightmare'), you enter the Sorceror's Chamber. From here you may commence your struggle, load a previously saved game or inspect the options screen. The numerous options are naturally user-friendly, and help your expedition no end. Your various carpet motions may be assigned to any joypad button, and may be saved to memory card. Most of the other options are self-explanatory; except for the Targeting feature which allows you to switch your target sights on or off; and the Damping option which blurs the screen when switched on (and thus is more effective at hiding the horizon updating). Once you're completely happy with everything, your adventuring may begin...

COLLECT YOUR MANA TO ACHIEVE EQUILIBRIUM!

The mission objectives in Magic Carpet are deceptively simple: You must build a mana storage facility (your castle) up to strength by collecting all the available mana from the realm. Firstly, familiarise yourself with your carpet's controls (for example, you cannot crash into the ground, and flying into walls results in your carpet lifting you above the obstacle), find a quiet area of land to position your castle and cast the castle spell (which you'll find on the very first level). As if by magic, a stone tower grows from the ground in front of you, complete with your flag (coloured white) and balloon. Then you must fly about the land, possessing every piece of mana you find into your colour. This is then retrieved by balloon and deposited back at the fortress until the castle becomes full and has to be expanded. Repeat this process until all the available mana is converted, and your level is complete.



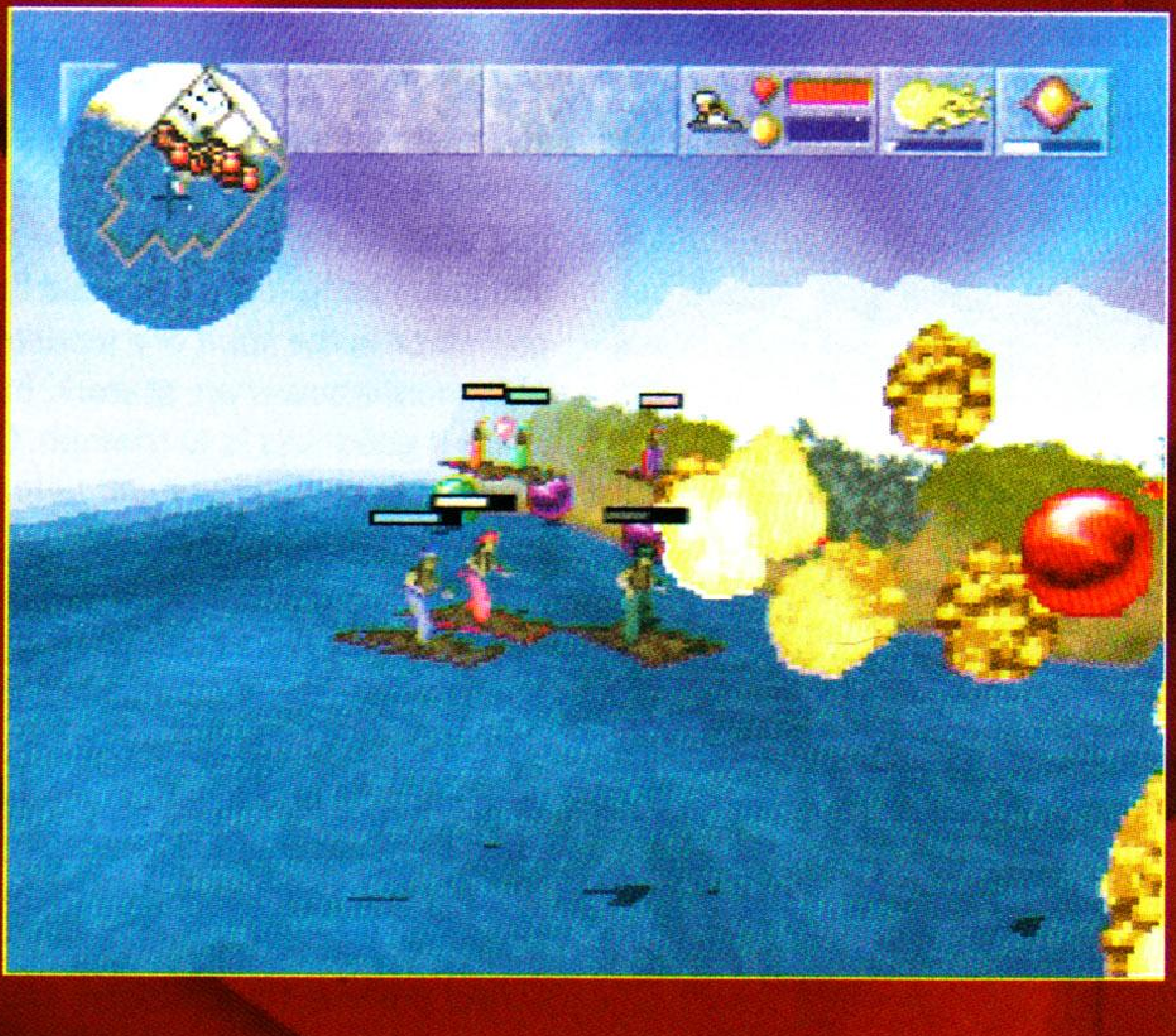
Your key to mana collection is your ivory tower. Cast the castle spell and a tower will appear almost anywhere!

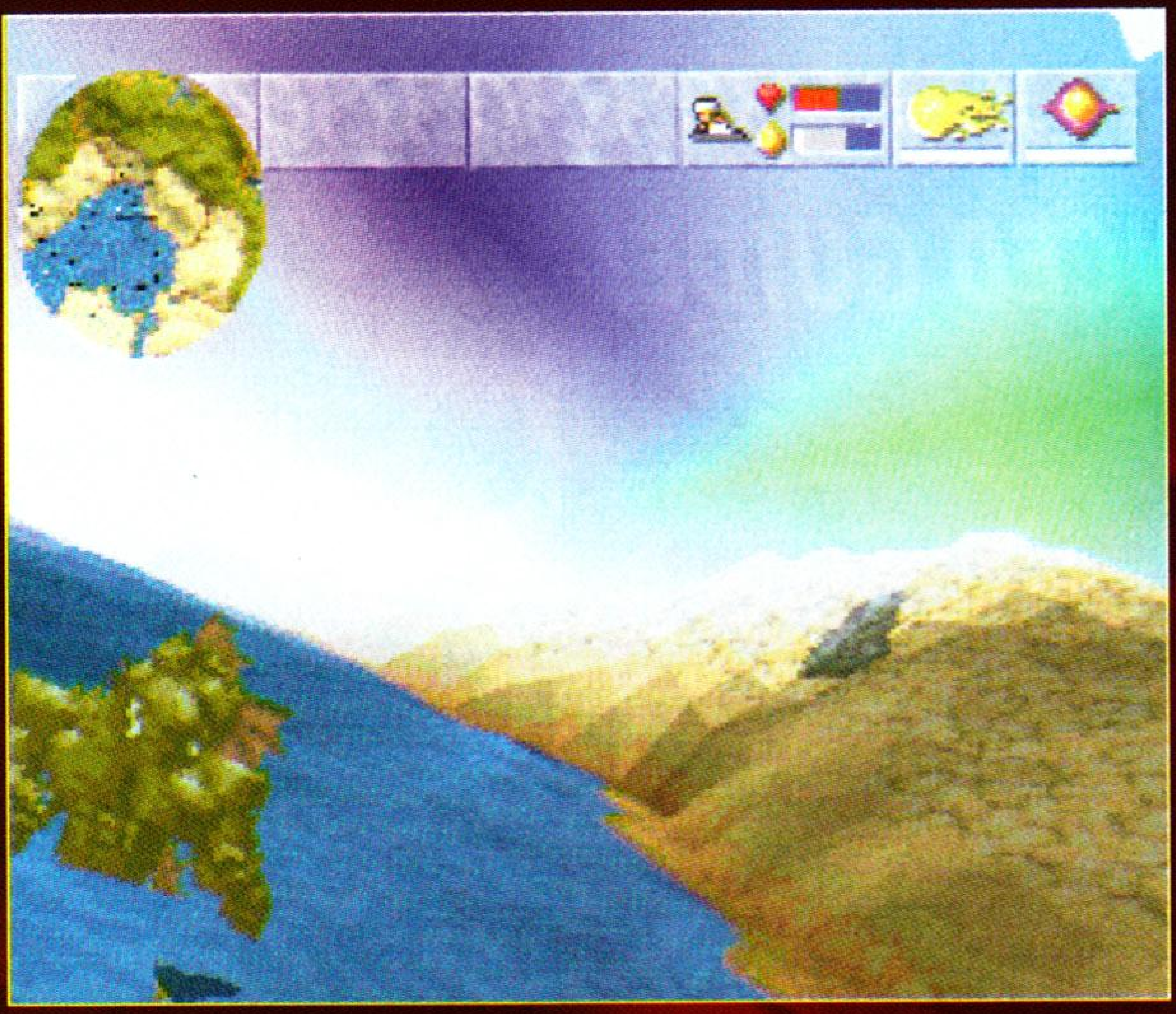
IN-GAME ICONOGRAPHY - A CARPET'S EYE VIEW!

After leaving the relative safety of the Sorceror's Chamber, you begin your questing in a new and unknown land. Gaze momentarily at the pastel haze of the sky before finding your bearings. In order for this to occur, you'll need to familiarise yourself with your icons. The game screen consists of the main playing area with an all-seeing eye and the stones of knowledge emblazoned across the top. The all-seeing eye shows your current position on the area map (which can be viewed by pressing select) along with every living thing, mana ball, castle and building represented. The eye is useful for gaining a greater awareness of your surroundings as the magical mists obscuring your view mean you'll be relying on the eye for all of your navigation.

Next to the eye is your castle stone, and this informs you of the strength of your castle (rated from one to seven), the health of your castle (when an outer section of castle is destroyed, the castle loses a strength point), and the mana level of your castle. In the middle of your screen is the balloon stone which shows how many balloons are floating about the realm (up to a maximum of three) and their health and capacity. Finally there is inscribed the Sorceror's stone, showing your health and mana levels, both of which may be restored by spells or by hovering over your home fortress. The last part of the icon screen reveals the spells you have currently, chosen from a maximum of 24 (these are detailed later), and which hand you fire them from. You may also choose to have the same spell in both hands.

THE PLAYSTATION AND SATURN VERSIONS ARE BOTH AVAILABLE AT THE END OF MARCH!

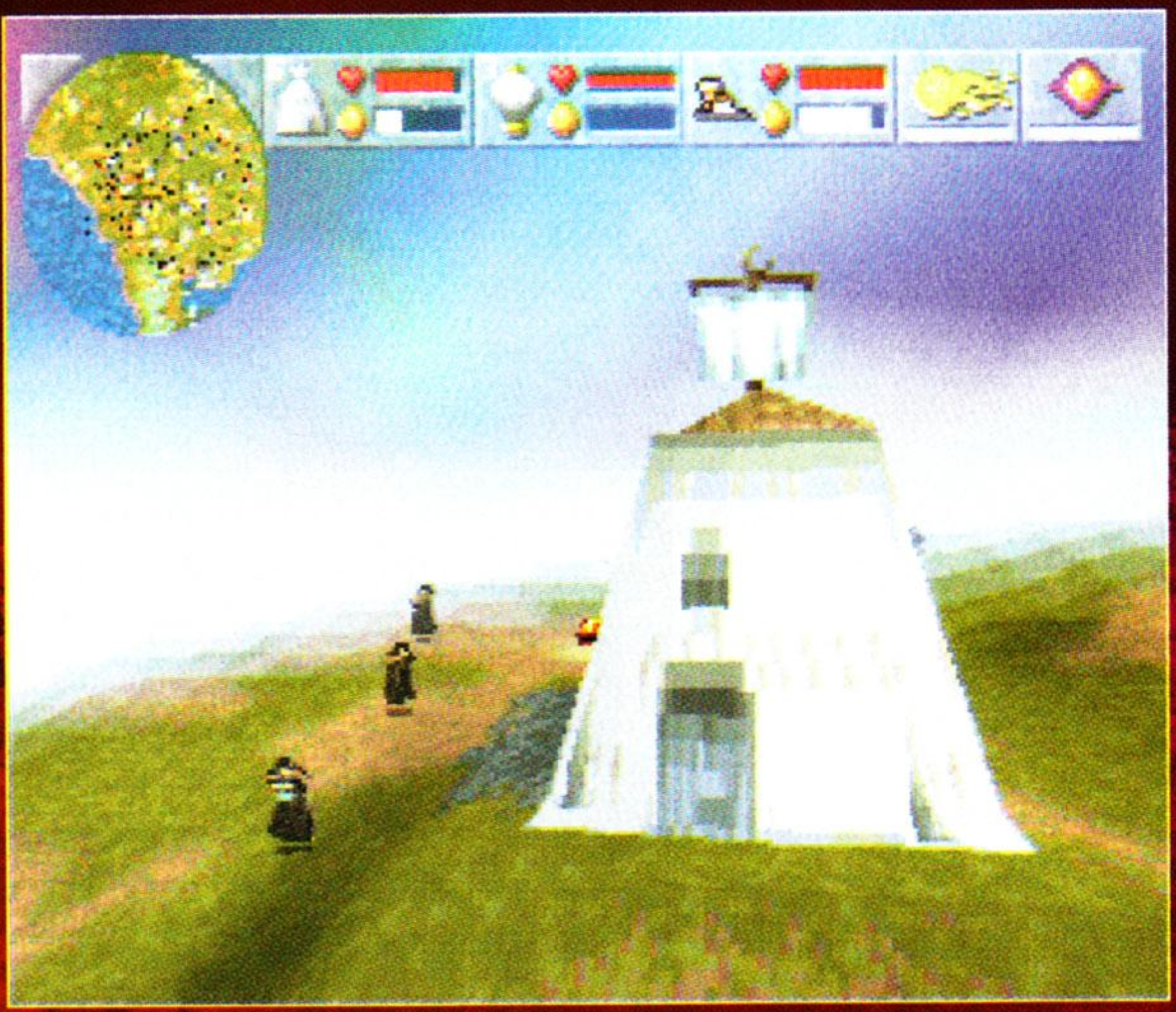




FLY OVER LAND, SEA, HILLS, VALLEYS, STONE CIRCLES, MOUNTAINS....

The scenery in Magic Carpet is some of the most undulating and interesting ever seen in a video game. The sweeping countryside simply takes your breath away, as does the speed with which you fly over these formations of nature. The sea actually moves in a rippling motion, whilst some of the more mountainous regions actually have snow-capped peaks. Another way to fully appreciate the scenery is to make your own. Obtain the volcano, earthquake or crater spell, and you may create your own landscapes. Flying down a deep trench that you have created is an excellent way to show off your wizard's power, and summoning a volcano in the middle of an opponent's fortress is a marvellous spectacle to behold. The other main feature that **MAXIMUM** found to be of merit was the atmospheric music and sound effects. Not only does the arabian music change to a more dramatic pace when combat begins, but the wind effects change when you fly over different portions of scenery. You can hear waves lapping when you hover over the sea, and villagers even mutter to each other as you fly over populated areas!

A small village encampment waits for you to possess it. Large settlements have their own bowmen on guard!



There are also many types of landmarks and scenic features to fly over whilst questing, such as stone circles, rings of stone gargoyles, mirrors (that act as teleporters) and lush forests that crackle and burn when you set fire to them. Bullfrog have created a truly believable 3D environment in which to collect your mana. Also watch out when flying over mountainous terrain in the middle of seas and stone circles; as they almost always trigger a detrimental effect.

Beautiful scenery is a trademark of this first class product. Sweep past lakes and mountains (above).

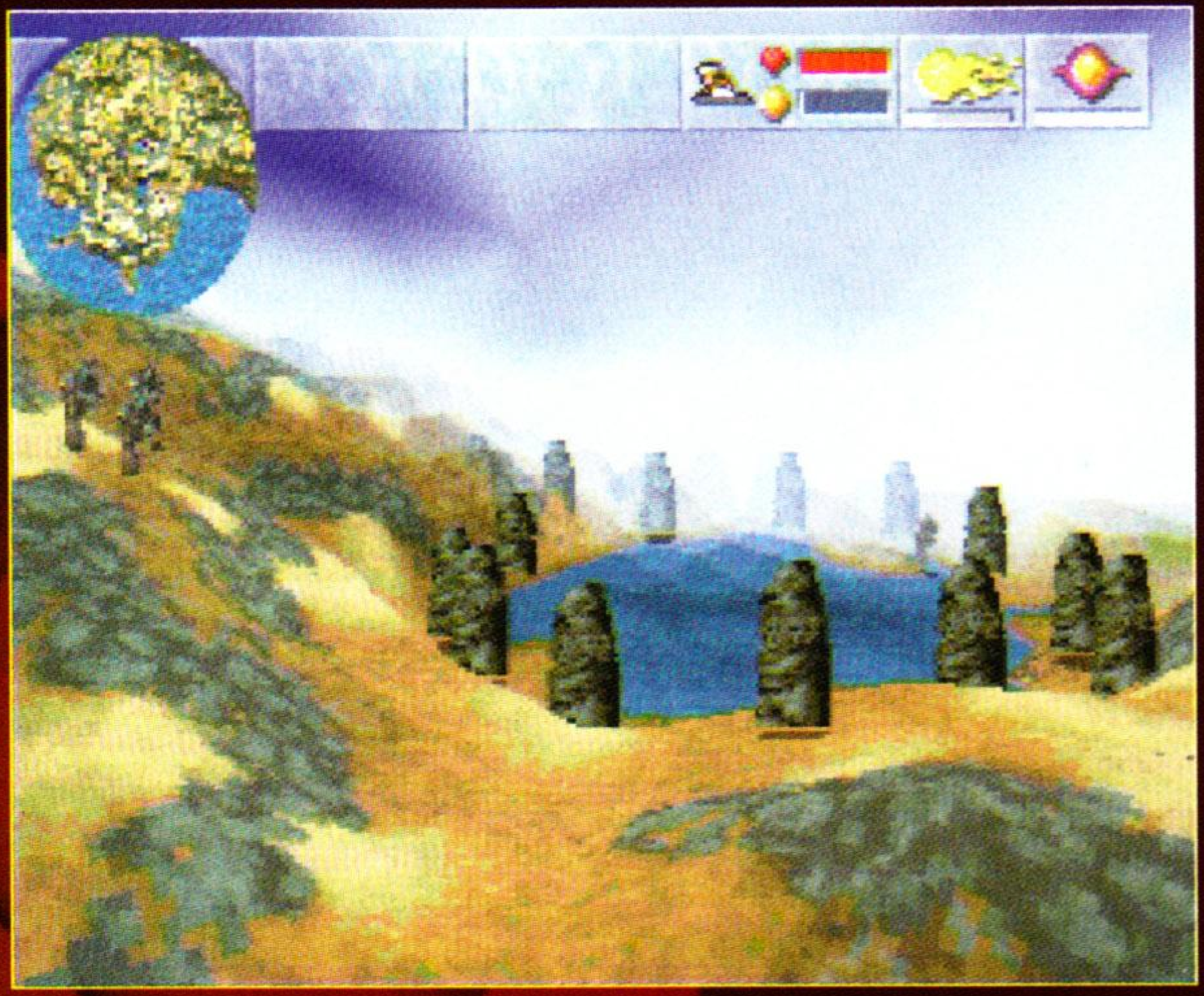
POSSESS THE WHOLE WORLD WITH YOUR POWER!

You may tap energy from a source other than the mana contained in monsters, and that is from the (initially neutral) population. On many levels there are a variety of strangely constructed towers, forts, folleys, monuments, tents and simple outhouses that you may possess in exactly the same manner. When these constructions become enslaved, the choir soundbite is heard, and a white flag flutters above the building. When searching the realm for a town or village to possess, it is wise to find a bustling market town, as villagers aid your struggle immensely. They come in three forms; builders, townsfolk and merchants. Builders are of particular use, erecting more houses (that can be possessed, thus increasing your mana levels) whilst merchants wander to other settlements, attracting attention to your town and selling goods. The population expansion has an advantage, as the villagers supply you with more mana, and a town reaching a certain size has groups of bowmen patrolling the area to ward of rival wizards and demonic beasts.

ONE OF THE MOST IN-DEPTH AND PLAYABLE 3D ACTION GAMES EVER SEEN!

DEATH IN A BLAZE OF SUPERNATURAL FIRE! WATCH FOR CARPET BURNS!

Once your quest begins, there are many occasions when the sheer number and power of the enemy troops causes all hope to be lost, and you find yourself close to death (whilst being chased by a swarm of angry bees, for example). Fear not, for death is but an illusion in the realms of the carpet, and providing you've constructed a castle, your spirit will reappear back at the focus of your mana; the white fortress. When you die before constructing a castle, you lose the right to begin immediately, and must commence the level again from the beginning. Therefore, **MAXIMUM** highly recommends that you construct a castle as soon as you are able.



"CONGRATULATIONS MASTER WIZARD! THE WORLD HAS BEEN RESTORED TO NATURE'S ORDER!" NOW PROGRESS MORE FRIGHTENING REALMS!

When you finally complete a level, a great rejoicing takes place from the indigenous population, and you may allow yourself a pat on the back. A message indicates that all the mana has been successfully captured and the realm is restored, and you may return to your Chamber to await a progress report. This report takes the form of list detailing the level name, and percentage of creatures and spells found (much like the report at the end of every Doom level) along with an overall performance. Once over, you may elect to save your game (which we strongly recommend) before continuing onwards into the deeper reaches of the world.

GUIDE YOUR CARPET ON A MONUMENTAL MISSION THROUGH 75 AWESOME LEVELS!

Become the true TURBANED WARLOCK with our ADVANCED GUIDE!

The **MAXIMUM** team were fanatics of the original PC version, despite the fact that it was impossible to finish. From playing experience on the PC, we graduated to the console versions with some helpful hints at completing the worlds of Magic Carpet, and also found many new tips that enable realms of the world to be conquered with less of a struggle. There are numerous tactics to employ, and many of them are common sense, but the most useful are presented beneath to help to take to the skies with a minimum of fuss and death.

You must play each level thoroughly, as the difficulty level soars when you pass the realm of Rannaxior (level ten), whilst any world after the land of Jondd Warr (level 20) should take at least an hour of hard dogfighting to conquer. This game will last you many months, oh yes indeed! A final mention must be made of level 49 (Shal Kazan), which contains the largest number of wyverns ever seen! What makes matters worse, is that the difficulty level increases phenomenally even after this level, as the Hidden Worlds are unbelievably difficult to complete. However, to get you started, here are a number of techniques that **MAXIMUM** has found to work well over a multitude of levels. Let the carpet flying begin!

Our Magician demonstrates his sea-faring tendencies by conjuring a fortress in the middle of a sea. Very safe, apart from marauding bands of kraken!

ESTABLISHING YOURSELF IN A NEW REALM

When entering a new realm for the first time, you should have saved your game first of all; as there's nothing quite as infuriating as forgetting to save a game, completing three or four new and lengthy levels (over the course of as many days) and then switching your machine off. Also, remember to tweak any other options that you dislike, such as flicking the target option to 'off' if you don't wish to view your opponent's energy bar, and switching the dampening to 'on' if you prefer a more blurred view of the realm. Once you're happy with your options selection, you may begin, and the first plan of action is the construction of a fortified encampment. Just where do you place your castle?

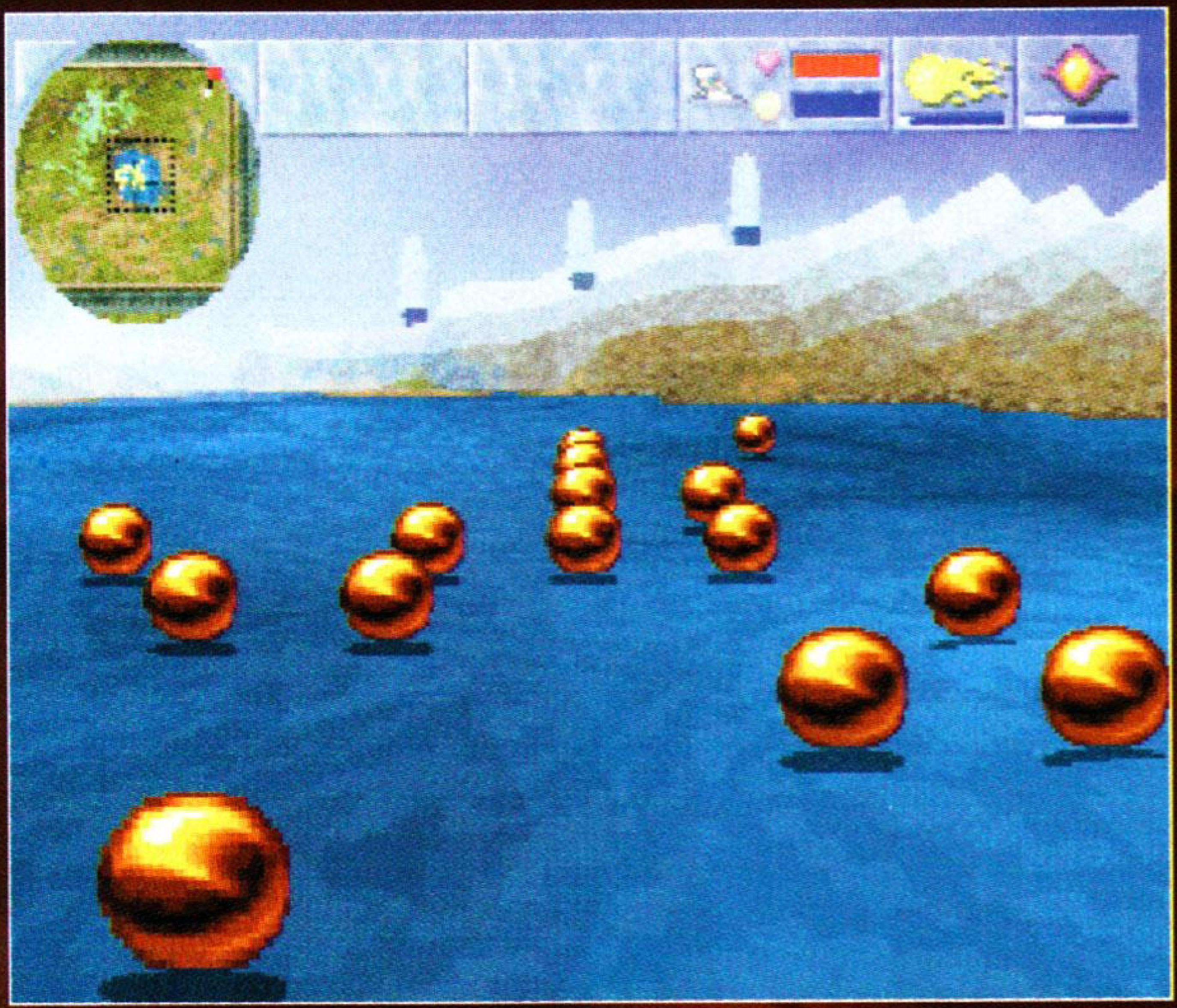
CASTLE MANAGEMENT - BUILDING YOUR MANA FORTRESS!

First of all, a castle should ideally be constructed on a flat rolling hillside, or else in the middle of a sea (that hopefully isn't crammed full of kraken). Resist the temptation to fire off a castle spell next to a cliff face just to watch the amazing construction graphics (as the ground is morphed from the ground beneath to form a firm foundation) as although spectacular, castles on entertaining parts of the scenery take longer to build, as the magic has to level the ground before constructing new fortifications. Once you have the crater spell, you may try the rather flash option of clearing away some undulating ground that you're not happy with, but this is generally saved until your castle has many walls. One final point; and that is to never build a castle near to a wall you cannot fly over, as the castle cannot be constructed on top of these walls. You may earthquake such impenetrable areas (as long as you're known as Mr mana), but this is far too much hassle. Remember to judge distances; there's nothing more infuriating than raising your castle up to a five-layered monster, only to find there's a wall stopping you from going any further.

So, you've selected a rather pleasant portion of grassy plain from which to grow your castle; now the time is right to build that castle, right? Yes, but there are a couple of aspects to consider first. Perhaps you could find a couple of nearby worms to dispatch and possess before construction begins, as then you would have some mana for your balloons to immediately collect. Another tip is to secure an area of golden mana before possessing it and then forming your citadel. Remember that any mana underneath a castle is absorbed instantaneously, instantly giving you a little more power.

The next point to remember follows on from this; as the construction of subsequent castle layers depends upon timing if you want to secure as much mana as is possible in the shortest amount of time. Firstly, it sometimes becomes necessary to flatten your castle (usually when it reaches stage two or three) and then raise it back up again. The reasons become clear when a swarm of bees are attacking your fortress. Simply demolish your fort (by pressing L1 and R1), allow the bees to swarm forward a little, before launching into a building frenzy. A rising castle automatically kills any beasts adjacent or over the castle boundary, and thus easy mana may be obtained. This trick also works when you decide to built an extra layer to your fortification: Wait for an monstrous onslaught (a flock of vultures swarming around the walls, for example) and then launch that castle spell! The vultures disintegrate into golden mana which is then

BULLFROG STORM INTO THE CONSOLE MARKET!

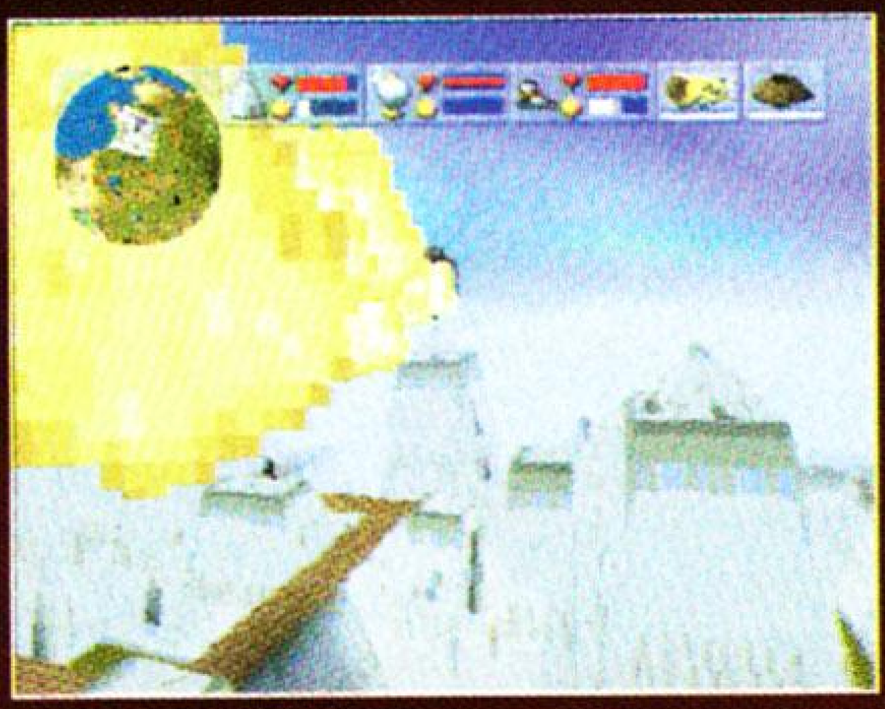


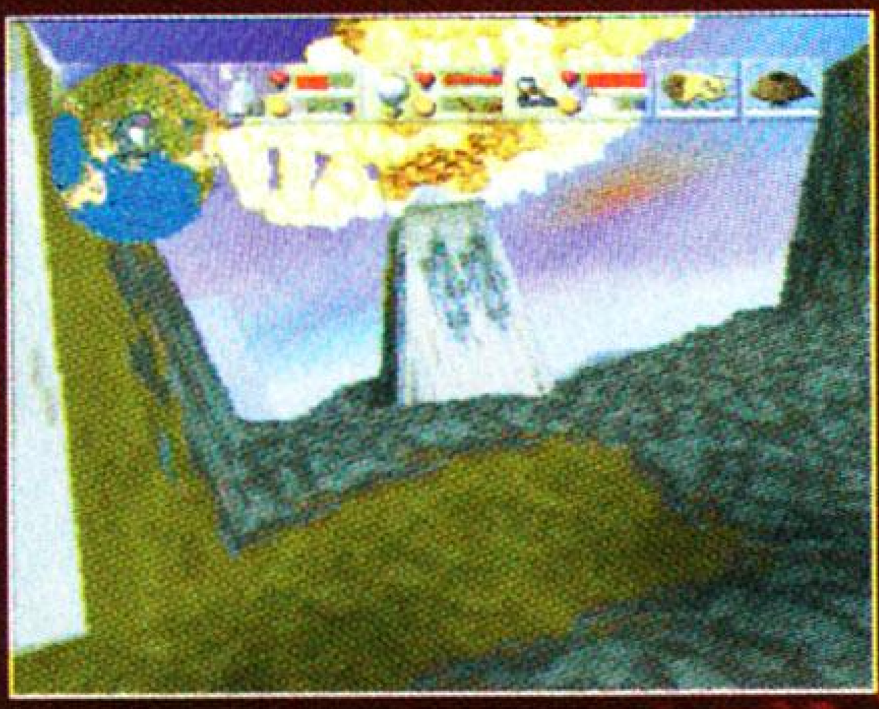
zapped and absorbed immediately. Also remember to change any mana to white, as there's nothing more stupid than searching for more mana when your castle holds a load of golden balls. Lastly, possess as many other buildings and villages as possible, as this gives you more mana without having to be collected.

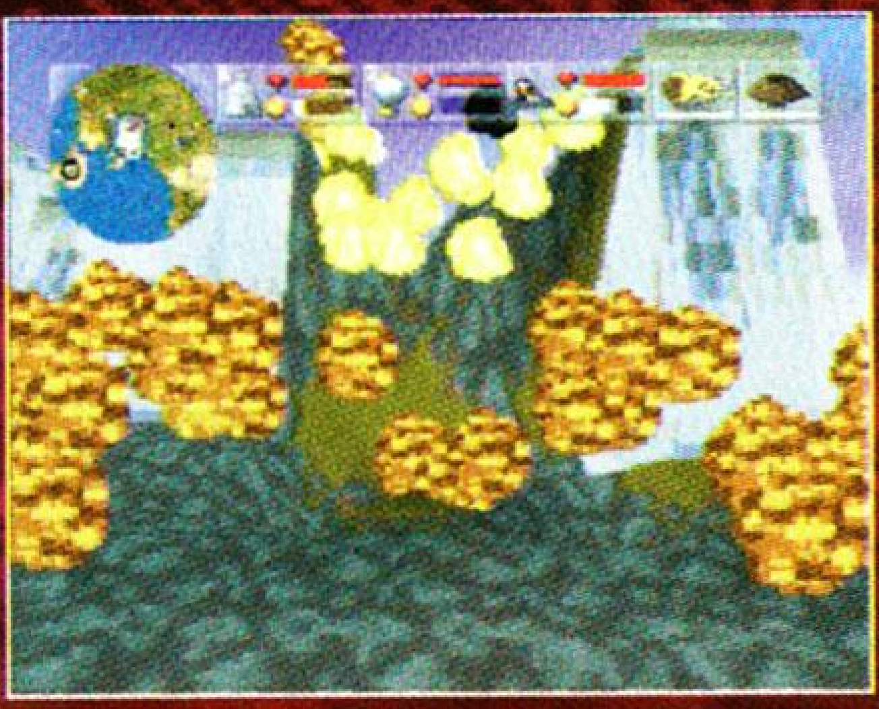
LOOK 'ERE! GET OFF MY MANA!

Once you've established a castle, your quest becomes the never-ending search for more mana. Lucky wizards may find a load of golden mana that is unclaimed, or might have spent a number of minutes engaged in furious combat with a wyvern for a huge supply of much-needed mana. Once you've secured a sizable quantity of mana, it is wise to use the mana magnet spell to group it all together and stand guard over the mana to avoid losing it all to an evil pest of a wizard. You should cry; "Go on! Get away with you! You're on my territory now! Get off my mana!", and shoot any wizards that venture too close. Another quick way to gain a large mana supply is to shoot an enemy wizard's balloon (particularly after he's fought tooth and nail to secure a great bundle of the stuff). Simply locate his mana carrier using the beyond sight spell, and zoom off to intercept. Balloons are extremely easy targets (if a little hardy), but the rewards speak for themselves (until your rival finds out, of course).

Our merry hero shows how to take down an enemy encampment with consummate ease (below). First a meteor, then a spot of cratering, followed by a volcano before an earthquake finally finishes the opponent wizard off.





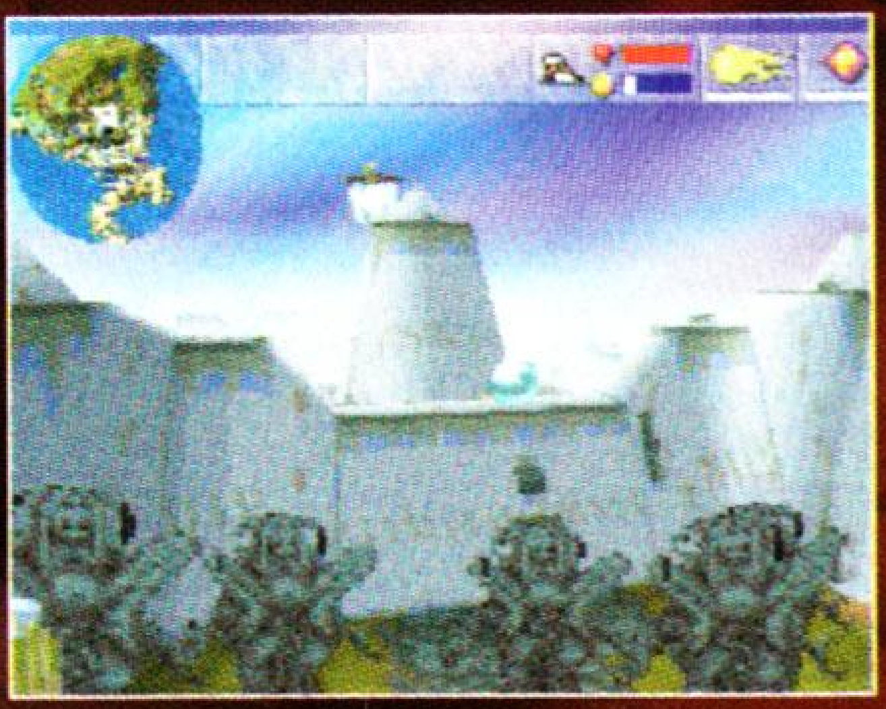


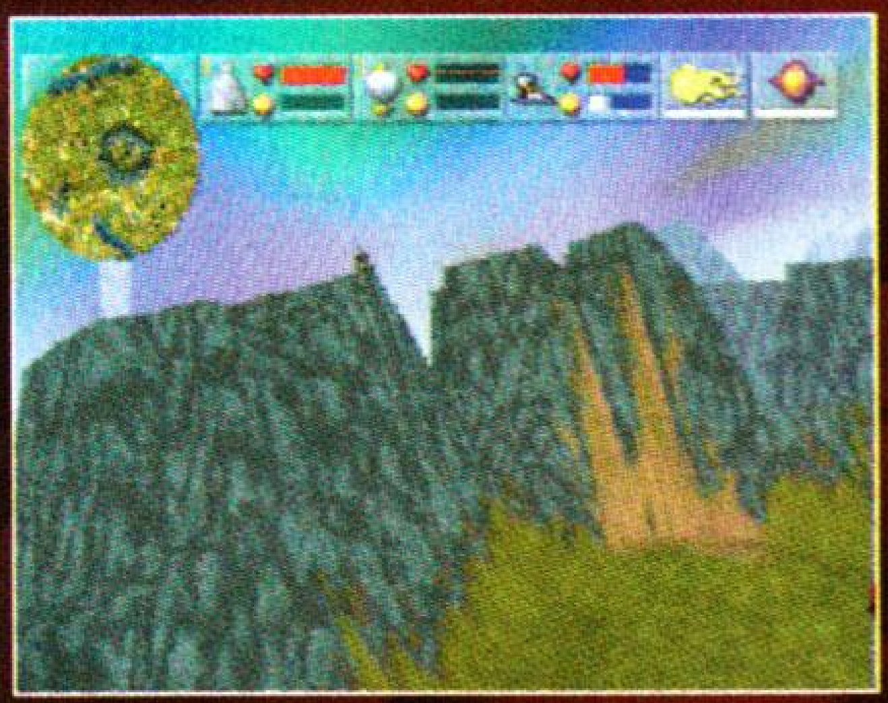
ACHIEVE A NEW LEVEL OF CARPET MASTERY WITH OUR AIRBORNE GUIDE!

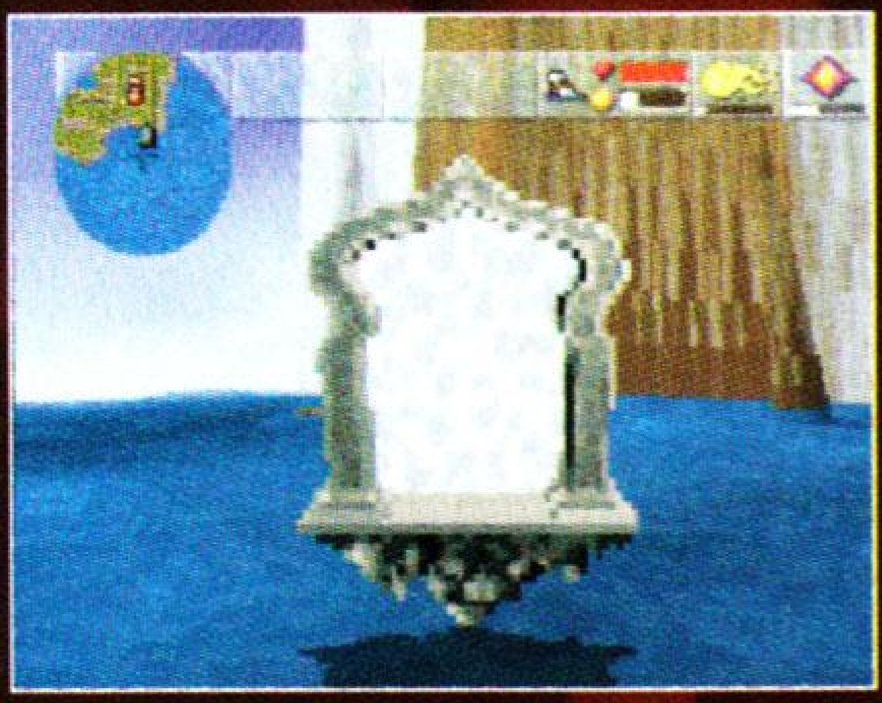
There are two excellent manoeuvres to learn when facing the majority of creatures in Magic Carpet. Fortunately, these aerial techniques are particularly simple to execute with the joypad, and should help your flying combat no end. Firstly, we have the circling move that is used to dodge attacks from slow moving monsters that throw projectile weapons. Creatures such as dragons, worms and trolls all trembled when we executed this flying feat; which is to zoom in for the kill (firing constantly), and then shift your carpet to the left or right whilst still facing your foe (in a technique similar to side-stepping in Doom). Time the shift so that you move just as an attack is about to hit, and you should never be wounded when facing any of these creatures. The other technique works on creatures with close combat abilities only, such as the bee or vulture. When faced with a troublesome bee, that you cannot locate, let alone destroy, it is wise to simply hit reverse and backtrack at high speed (possibly with an accelerate spell for good measure). Your foe is left chomping into thin air, whilst you can target him for immediate destruction.

WATCH OUT FOR STRANGE SCENERY!

Be very wary of all the odd scenery present in Magic Carpet, as there are many ways to die having previously ignored that rather strange X that appeared on your all-seeing eye. The most obvious is the stone circle with the magical jar inside it. This is most definitely a trap, and therefore you should concentrate on castle building before attempting to grab a new spell. Secondly, be extremely wary of all scenic features, such as crevasses, massive raised hills in the shape of a doughnut, and strange monoliths. Fly over or under any of these features, and a multitude of monster are likely to warp in, baying for your blood! Finally, be extremely wary of mirrors, as they may teleport you straight to your death. Never build a castle near to a mirror, as the parapets may hide the mirror until you blindly fly into it, and end up facing a squadron of dragons!







A whole host of strange scenic features may be interacted with (above). From the top, a summoning circle of gargoyles beckons you. Dare you enter? Secondly, an odd rock formation holds deadly secrets. Lastly, a mirror that can transport you across time and space!

WIZARD TAKEDOWN TECHNIQUES!

Last on our list of advanced techniques are ways to defeat those annoying enemy wizards that trouble you throughout the game. Some are extremely weak and stupid, but most are real cunning devils that begin your level with a stage five castle and seven platoons of undead bowmen. The first technique is the unsubtle approach: Build up your fortress to an acceptable level, and then venture towards an enemy fortress. Arm yourself with a meteor spell (or a crater, earthquake or volcano spell if you have one of them) and then commit wanton acts of carnage to he beloved citadel shouting "Die die die enemy pig-dog!". After you've taken down a layer of castle wall, possess a load of mana and speed back to your castle (using the accelerate or teleport spell) before powering back up and speeding (using accelerate or teleport) back again. Then continue your epic destructive battle! This may not destroy him, but at least your balloons have a field day, and your strength should be in no doubt.

The other (and more cunning) way to take down an enemy wizard is to formulate some sort of plan, unlike the 'hit hard and keep hitting hard' approach. Firstly, find a wizard, and then cast duel. Then hit him with a meteor or two until he runs out of healing spells and is close to death. Then follow him back to his castle and destroy him just before he enters the fortress walls. Possess his bones (thus capturing any of his remaining mana and lengthening the time it takes him to reappear) and then completely decimate his castle in an awesome display of earthquakes and volcanoes before his castle can heal him!

ENTER THE HIDDEN WORLDS - A MONUMENTAL QUEST FOR TRUE MAGIC CARPET FANATICS!!

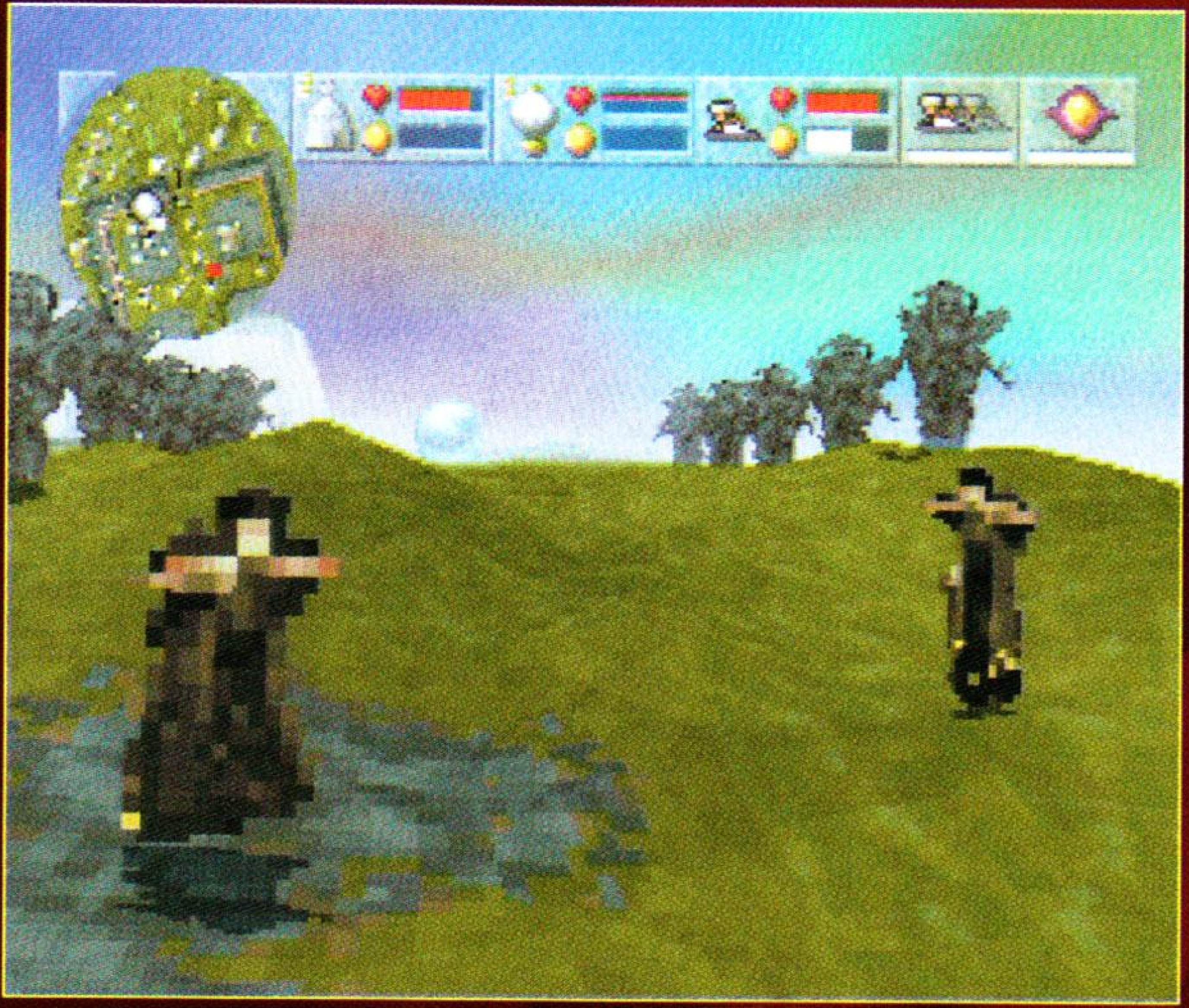
Should you manage to complete the first 50 phenomenally difficult levels of Magic Carpet, you are rewarded for your actions, and given a new world to explore; known as the Hidden Worlds. We don't want to reveal much about this land, but let us state that it tests true hardcore gamers to their very limits. Can you journey through the ice and snow, avoid a multitude of enemy wizards, and find the fabled homing meteor? Good luck wizard; you'll most definitely need it!

A host of FANTASTIC CREATURES lie in wait for your WIZARD!

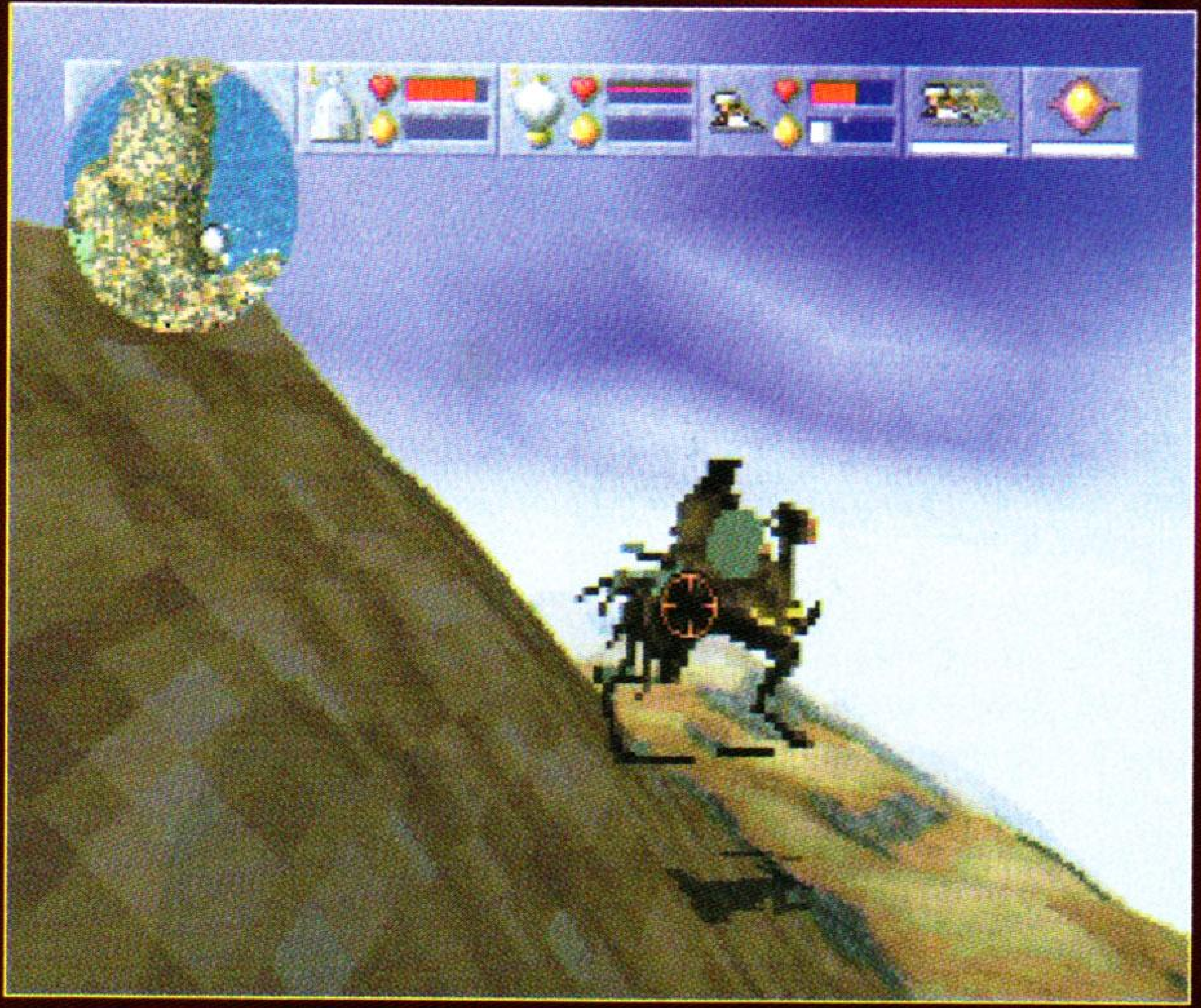
Your adventures through the realms of Magic Carpet will test your endurance, agility and skill to the very limits. The numerous levels become deadly and difficult after an exceedingly short time, and the main reason for this lies in the many mythical creatures that inhabit the mystical lands. These creatures were created during the War of the Wizards and have gained a foothold in the previously tranquil lands of the earth, multiplying to an unmanageable extent. Villagers fear for their lives and report major incursions throughout the realm. Restore the lands to nature's order, and quickly!

The creatures in Magic Carpet benefit from an excellent artificial intelligence and also look suitably mythical. What marks these creatures from others seen in many previous games are the ways in which they react to the player. Griffins, for example, will quite happy fly around you in groups until you decide to fire at them (and then they launch into a ferocious attack) whilst Dragons have the intelligence to attack a weaker wizard before turning their attentions to your carpet-based antics. All these subtleties have lead **MAXIMUM** to study each of the creatures that inhabit the lands of the carpet, before detailing their strengths and weaknesses. They are now presented to you for your delight and delectation..

DESTROY all monsters!! Restore THE NATURE REALM to order!!

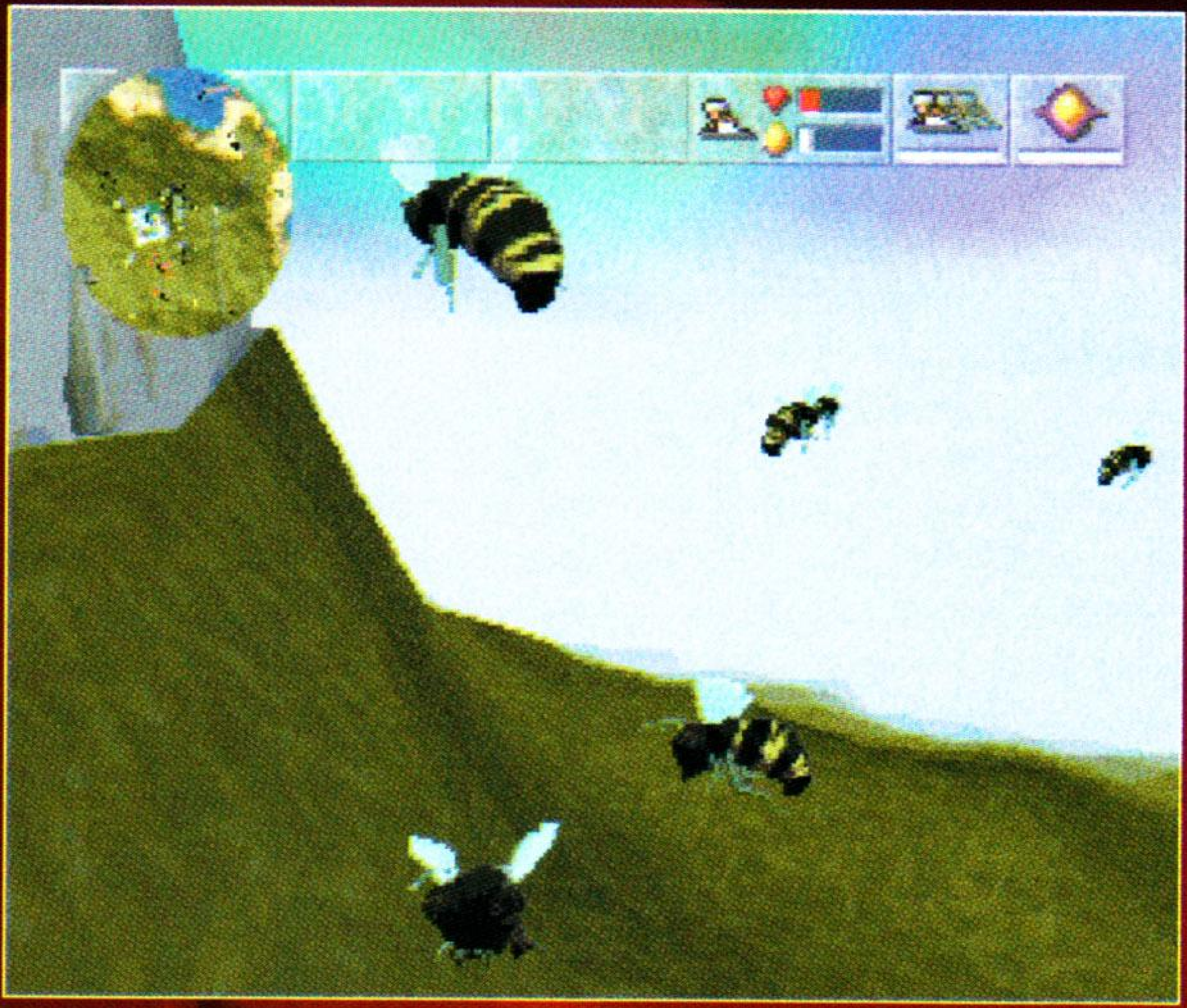


BOWMEN - MINDLESS HUMANS SERVE TO INFLICT AERIAL DAMAGE!
Bowmen pose no threat whatsoever to the competent Magic Carpet player, as they are usually wide of the mark with their short bows, and when encountered in overland expeditions, they appear in groups of no more than five. The difference between bowmen and skeleton warriors is easy to spot; bowmen have no banding ability and their arrows inflict lesser damage. Even when defending a castle or a village of neutral humans, they are annoyingly incompetent. With only a small amount of mana available after their destruction, they are extremely small fry that you may decide to dispatch with a nonchalant fireball or two.



EMU RIDERS - FLIGHTLESS BUT INCREDIBLY FAST, WITH A BOWMAN ON TOP!
A rather humourous (and some would say pointless) creature is the emu, and these birds carry an incompetent bowman around the realms of nature at lightning speeds. The emu rider's running ability is the only commendable feature of an otherwise lamentable creature that poses no threat at all. Stupid and ineffectual in combat, these riders simply journey about with awesome agility, and our advice would be to put them out of their misery as soon as you can. This is easy mana!

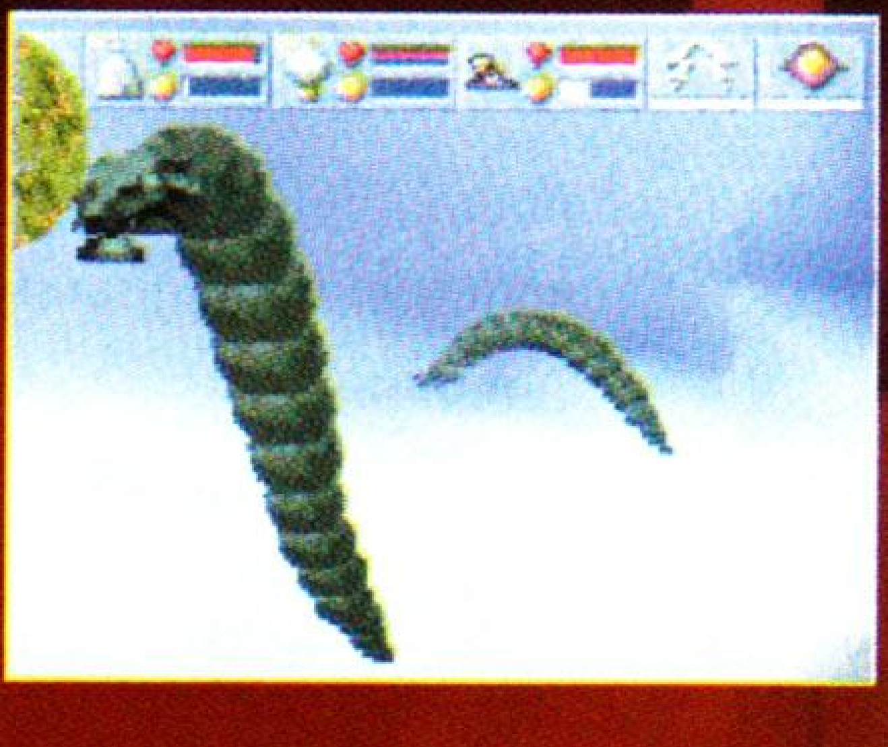
BEES - A SWARM OF GIANT KILLER INSECTS THAT STING AND SKEWER!
Bees are a major headache for the beginner to Magic Carpet, and until you know how to effectively destroy them, You always encounter bees in swarms, and they always attack you at the first opportunity. Their sting is very harmful, and with groups of up to twenty creatures buzzing around you at any one time, you must retreat or face a very painful death (unless, of course, you have the appropriate offensive ordinance). Without the more powerful spells, a wizard must employ one of MAXIMUM's preferred killing techniques (as detailed in the advanced techniques section) - the backpedal. They are faster, tougher and more manoeuvrable than the vulture, but still need to be close to inflict damage, and this is their main weakness.

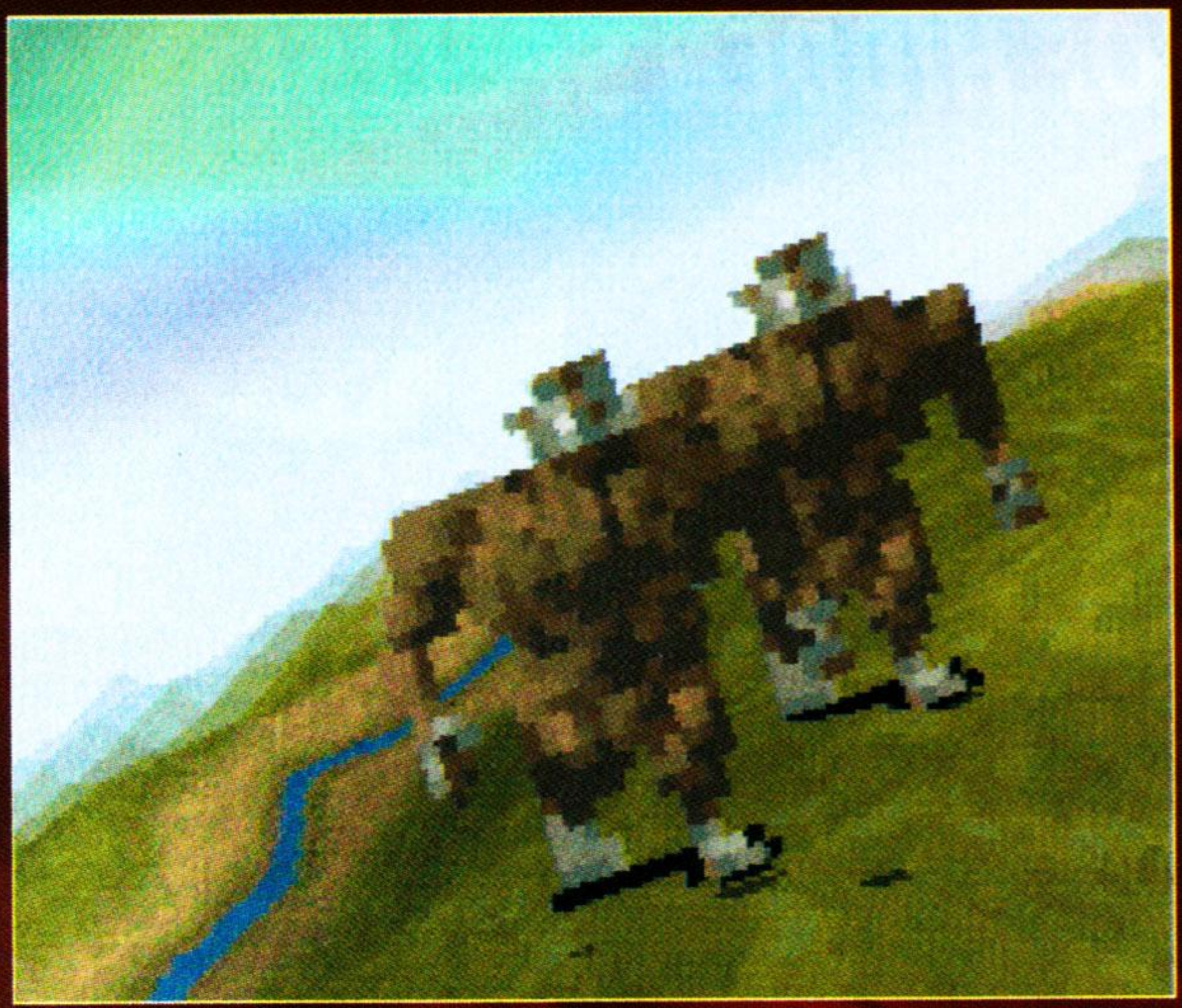


WORMS - MINDLESS AND BLIND, BUT TOUGH AS OLD BOOTS!
One of the first weird and wonderful creatures that you'll meet on your monumental journey through the realms of Magic Carpet is the worm. These many-segmented beasties slither across the landscape at a slow but purposeful pace, and may be encountered in groups of up to five. They are bad-tempered creatures, firing as soon as they sense you, and continuing until one of you dies. However, as these fireballs are rather weak and are fired at a very slow rate, this gives you the chance to destroy this mammoth snake in a matter of seconds. Like the vulture, the worm's angry shrieks are far more frightening than any damage it does. Only avoid worms at the very beginning of levels before you've constructed your first tower.

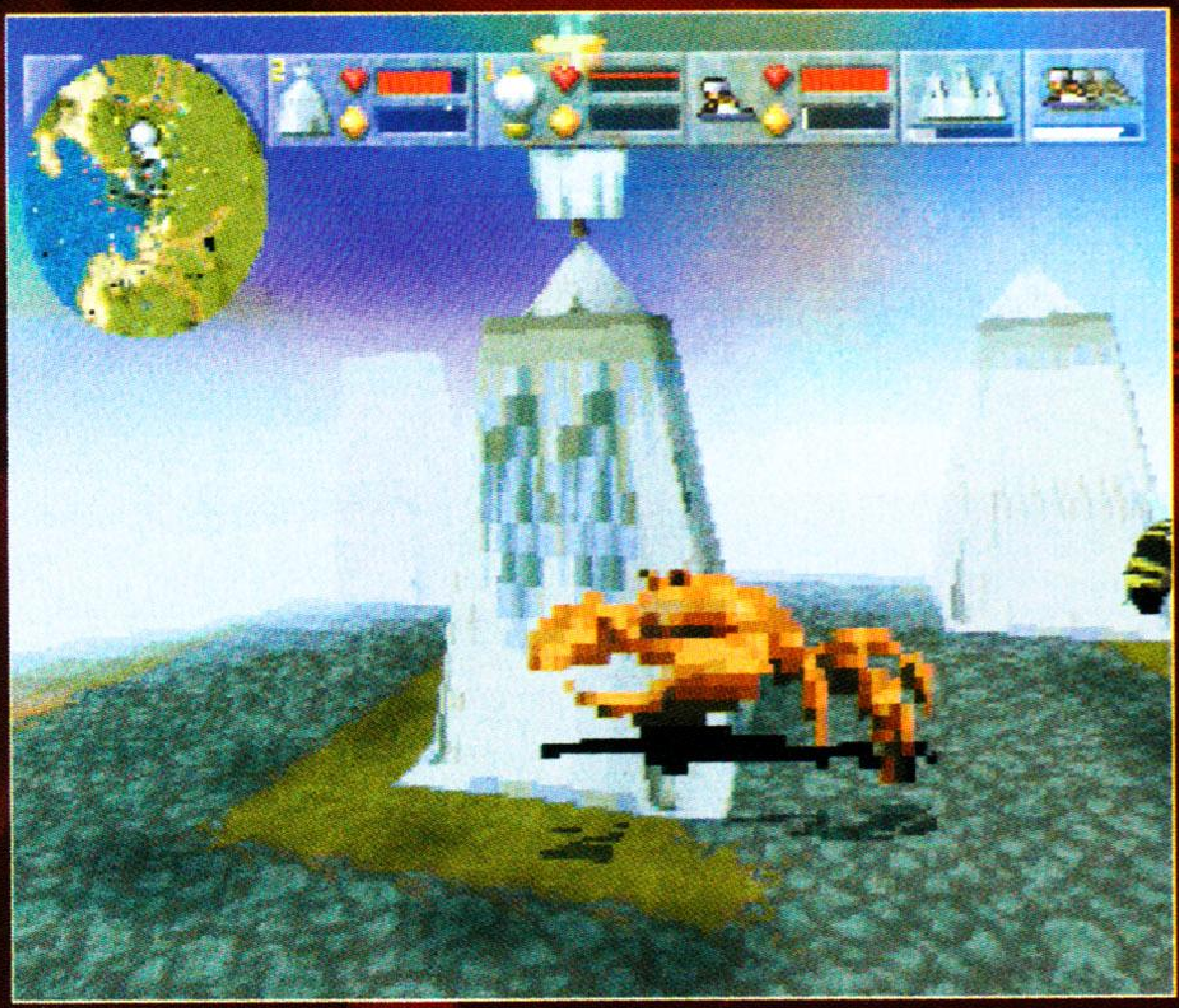
VULTURES - BONY AND BEADY-EYED BIRDS CONSUME EVERY CARCASS!
These scraggly and malnourished creatures fly in diseased flocks, feasting on the dead and dying. Villagers are constantly plagued with swarms of these pests that gnaw and peck on those unfortunate (and recently deceased) villagers waiting to be buried. Once you enter the land, these flocks descend to peck at you and your carpet whilst shrieking and cawing horribly. The vulture is another creature that poses little threat to any competent carpeteer, as they have no ranged attacks at all and their close range damage is minimal. Vultures sometimes attack in groups, or more often in smaller bands of four or five, but a few fireballs take care of them.

DRAGONS - GRACEFUL AND ANCIENT FLYING FIENDS!
Best described as a worm from the heavens, dragons fire the same fireballs and take the same amount of punishment before dying, but have a much greater intelligence, deciding to fire upon you when they feel the time is right. In some instances, they turn about and head off to intercept an enemy wizard, and at other times, they seem to grow angry and head straight for you. These creatures are from a different age, but still prove no real threat to the professional rug-flyer. Use the same tactics to dispatch these beings as for the worm, before collecting the sizable amounts of mana left by their departing spirits.



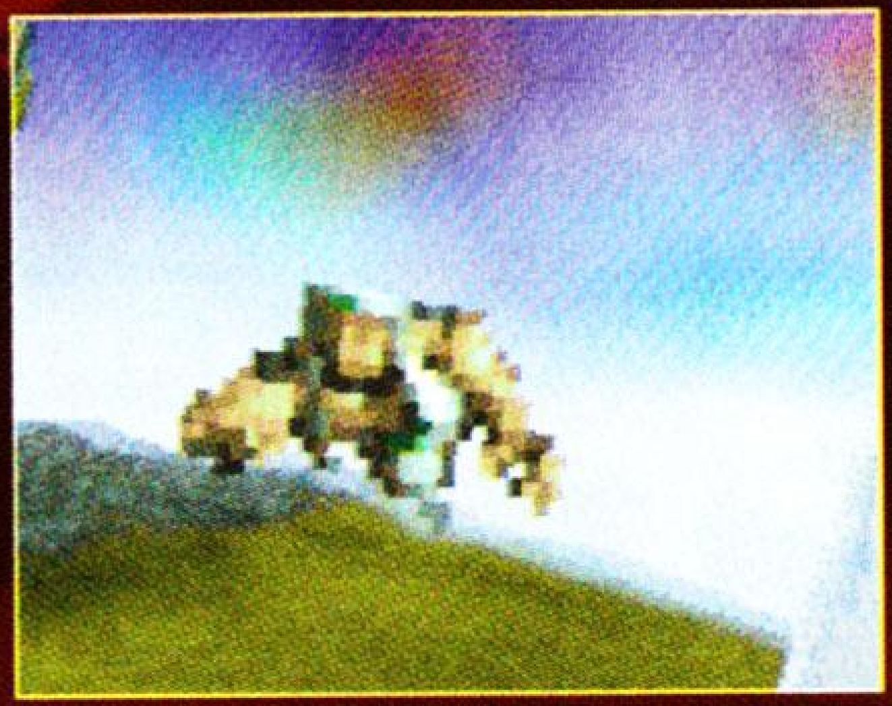


APES - BROWN, HAIRY AND READY TO RIP YOU LIMB FROM LIMB!
These large and aggressive monkeymen behave in exactly the same manner as the troll. When constructing your impenetrable fortress, try to steer away from a troll and ape stronghold as they become infuriated at your building exploits and will launch many rocks at your castle. This is to be avoided until your mana levels have reached a sufficiently high level, and then the projectile war can begin!

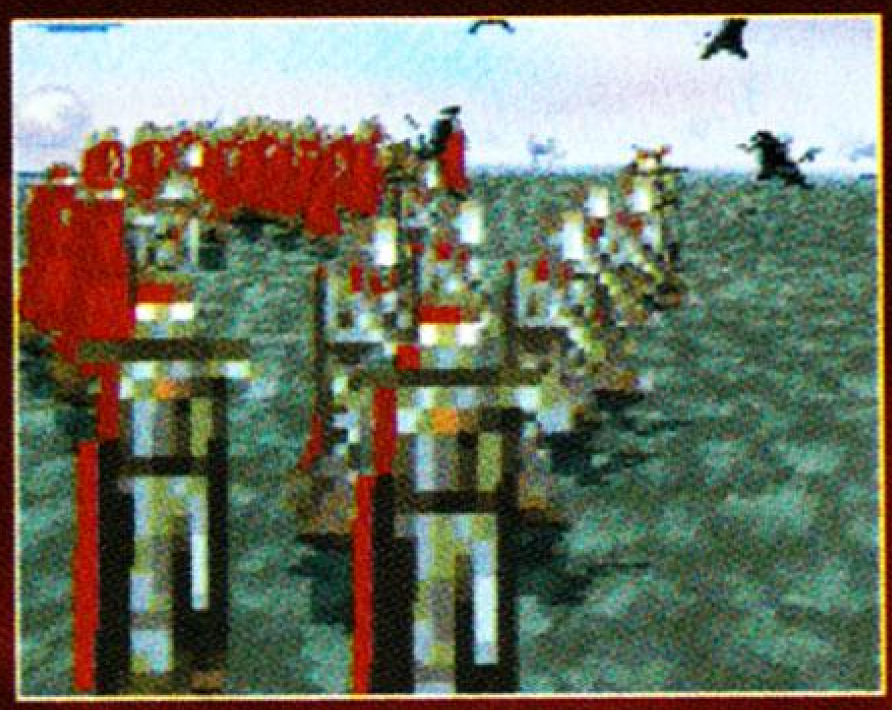


CRABS - CROWDS OF CUNNING CRUSTACEANS CLAW AND CONSUME MANA!
Crabs have a unique power, in that they may consume mana on their travels from a beach. After a number of mana balls have been eaten, these orange pincer wielders grow to mid-sized versions before continuing their feasting, and then a final transformation takes place with the crabs reaching a gargantuan width, and these can even lay eggs! The tiny crabs fire fireballs, mid-sized crabs punish you with lightning whilst the behemoth crabs chuck full-sized meteors at you! Obviously, when you hear the clapping of their pincers, you should immediately head towards the crab to destroy it before the enlargement takes place. Crabs have an annoying habit of heading towards a castle before attacking it, and you should bear this in mind when setting up camp next to a beach.

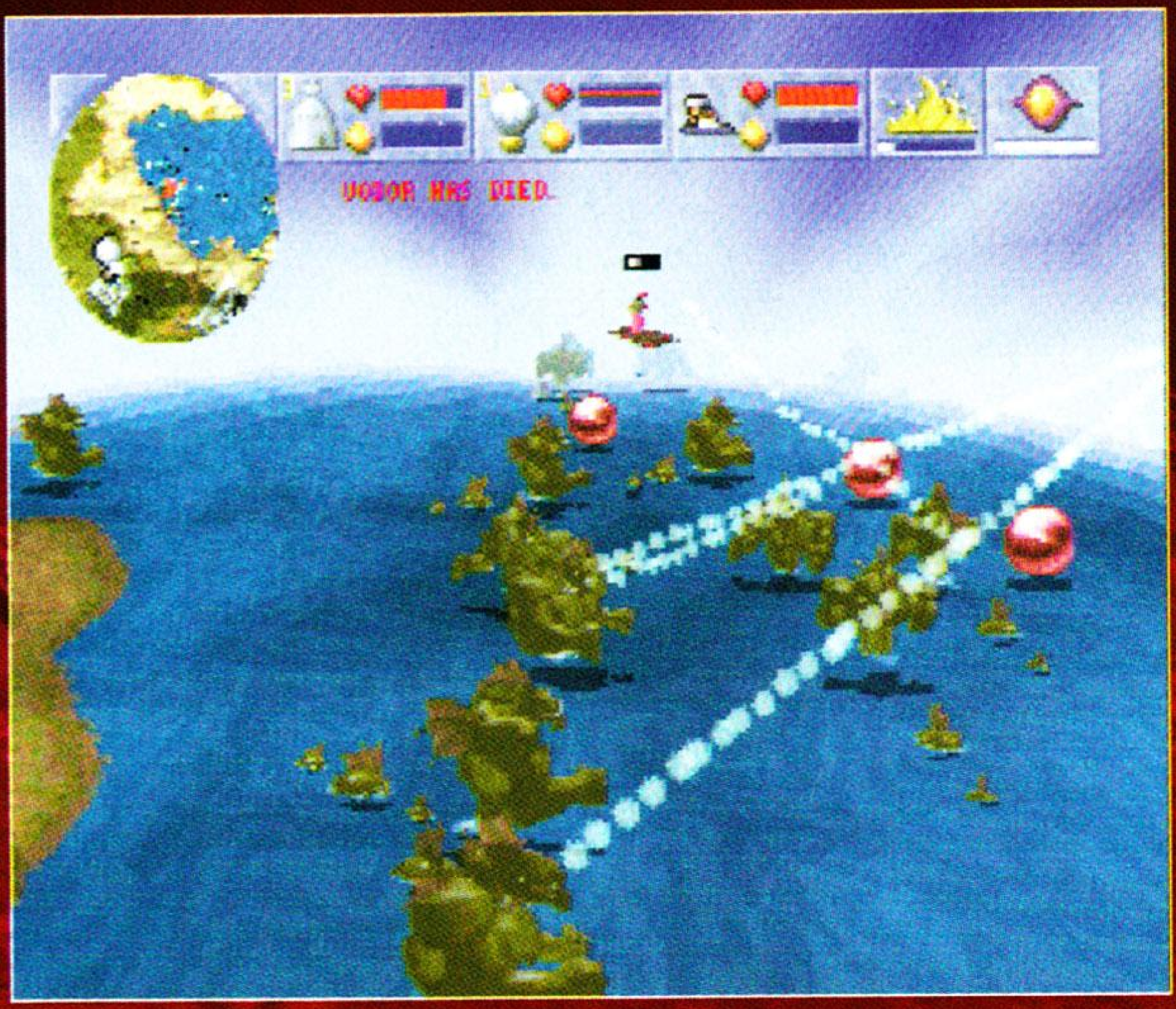
WYVERN - A GIGANTIC FLYING NIGHTMARE! A MONSTROUS TERROR!
Magic Carpet's most vicious and terrifying creature is the wyvern. This huge dragon-like beast is a mottled brown colour and can fly at high speeds to wherever it desires. Spoken about in hushed tones throughout the lands, these ultimate destructive beasts are simply breathtaking to view, and horrific to battle against. Once you've angered a wyvern, you should expect a quick and flaming death, as it attacks with rapid bursts of fireballs and simply shrugs off any of your basic or mid-ranged attacks (including the rebound spell). Wyverns attack castles with an awesome destructive force and can also skim the countryside consuming vast quantities of mana, and even if you manage to whittle down a wyvern's energy, it can simply regenerate any damage and attack you with a full-strength rapid assault. So how do you defeat such a foe? Well, master wizard, the plan of attack is entirely up to you. And remember; never fly into a flock of these behemoths, as death awaits those foolish enough to attempt such a feat.



GENIE - A TOWERING SPIRIT CHALLENGES YOU TO A BATTLE IN THE SKIES!
Genies (above right) are the most annoying creatures in the entire Magic Carpet experience, as they have an monumentally irritating habit of appearing at the start of a level and thieving your mana with a steal mana spell before fireballing you to add injury to insult. A mocking laughter ringing out across the hillside is an indication of a genie's presence, and they can match your speed as they sap your strength. When encountering this bearded chap, be sure to create a castle immediately before heading off to battle with him. Rebound his attacks and fireball him into the earth, before searching the land for any signs of his presence, as he once he has an annoying habit of teleporting away, only to return at full strength. Make a genie the first target of your fiery vengeance.



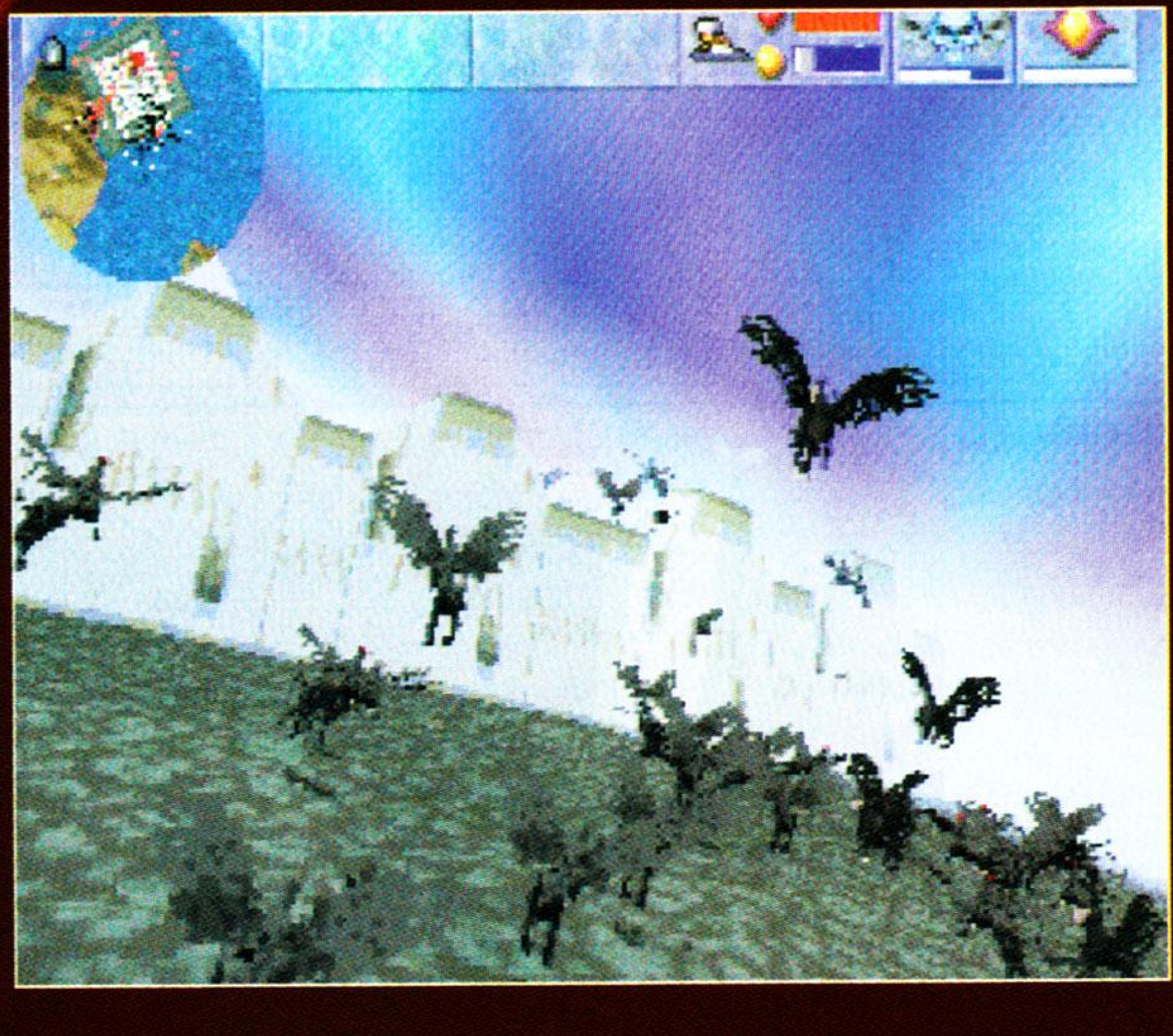
SKELETONS - BANDS OF BONY BLOKES FIRE AT FORTRESSES WITH FEROCITY!
Resting deep in the bowels of the earth are the bodies of fallen soldiers, waiting to be given a proper burial ceremony. Unfortunately, in these times of warfare, this is a somewhat hopeful wish, as these soldiers are more likely to be raised once more to fight in the ranks of an undead army. Appearing after you fly over a standing stone (or already in play and attacking a human village), these putrefying gentlemen fire volley after volley at any spot where bowmen are likely to lurk (such as your castle), and for every bowman they kill, another warrior is summoned into this expanding army of the dead. More accurate than the bowman, but slow and susceptible to rapid fireball or lightning attacks, these can be stopped by an appropriately empowered wizard.



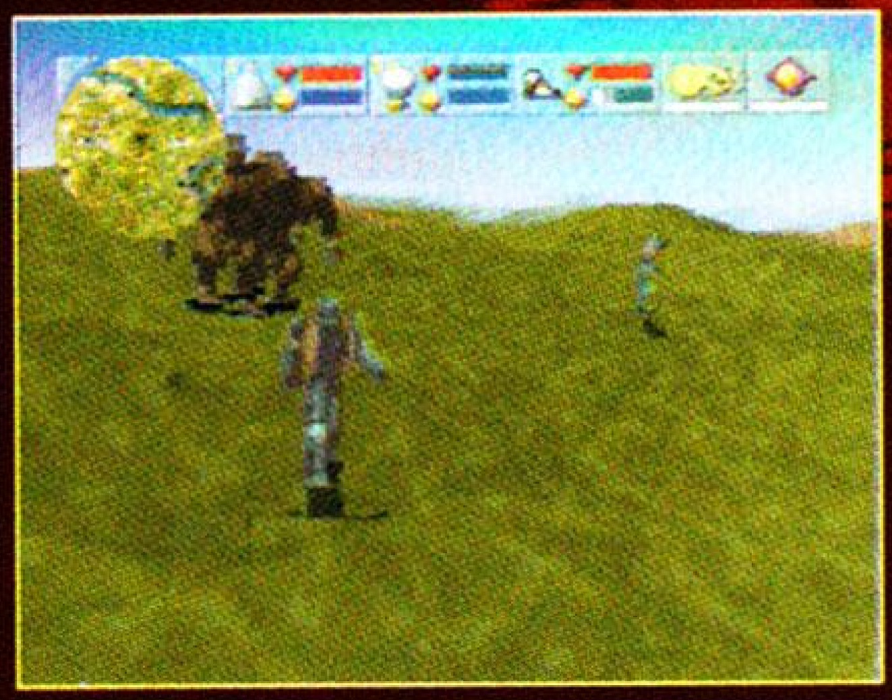
VODOR HAS DIED.

KRAKEN - RISING FROM THE DEEP TO CLAIM YOUR SOUL!
The only sea-based creature of the game is the mighty kraken. Always encountered in groups, and mostly summoned during a level after you've inadvertently flown over a summoning point, these monstrous green amphibious creatures announce their presence by boiling the waters around them. Kraken are to be avoided by even the most powerful wizards (unless they have a teleport spell or two) as they have a powerful duel spell which they use to drag you to a watery grave, after a quick frenzy of lightning bolts. As soon as kraken appear, evaluate the situation before attacking, and try to drag yourself away from their clutches as soon as you can. The kraken does have one advantage, and that is the plentiful mana supply that it transforms into when destroyed.

THE MYSTICAL LANDS OF MAGIC CARPET HOLD UNTOLD TERRORS! ARM YOURSELF, WIZARD! THERE ARE GREAT BEASTS TO KILL!

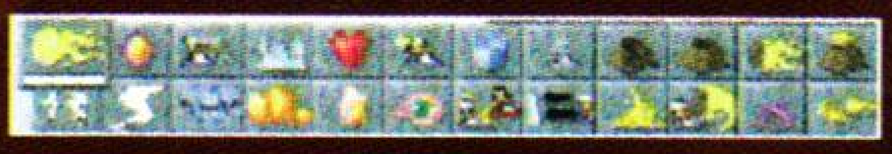


GRIFFIN - A HUGE AND NOBLE FOE! DO NOT PROVOKE THE GRIFFIN!
The griffin is one of the more intelligent creatures of the Magic Carpet realm, and never attacks until you fire first. This means that a cunning wizard may follow a band of griffins to an enemy castle and hope that the computer wizard attacks this merry band of flying monsters. Then you can watch the destructive power of the griffin in full effect. The griffin's cry is fear-inducing, it can see through any invisibility spells you may be using, and is generally deadly with any attacks it decides to use. More than five griffins in one flying contingent should only be challenged by the most powerful (or foolish) wizard.



TROLLS - GREAT LUMBERING GIANTS WITH GRANITE PROJECTILES!
Trolls and their bigger cousins, the apes, are some of the largest land-based creatures of the entire game. They always wander the landscape in groups of up to thirty, and only really attack with any degree of ferocity when you decide on a fly-by shooting. These grey giants scoop rock from the earth and throw it towards you with great speed, so it is best to dodge any incoming chunks, as three or four hitting you squarely in the turban causes a major amount of pain (and a flaming death). Also, make sure a troll explodes in a shower of mana, as they have the power to regenerate damage.

The WAR-TORN LANDS hold a multitude OF HIDDEN SPELLS!



Magic Carpet offers the competent rug warrior a choice of 24 deadly and useful spells. Here they all are (above)!

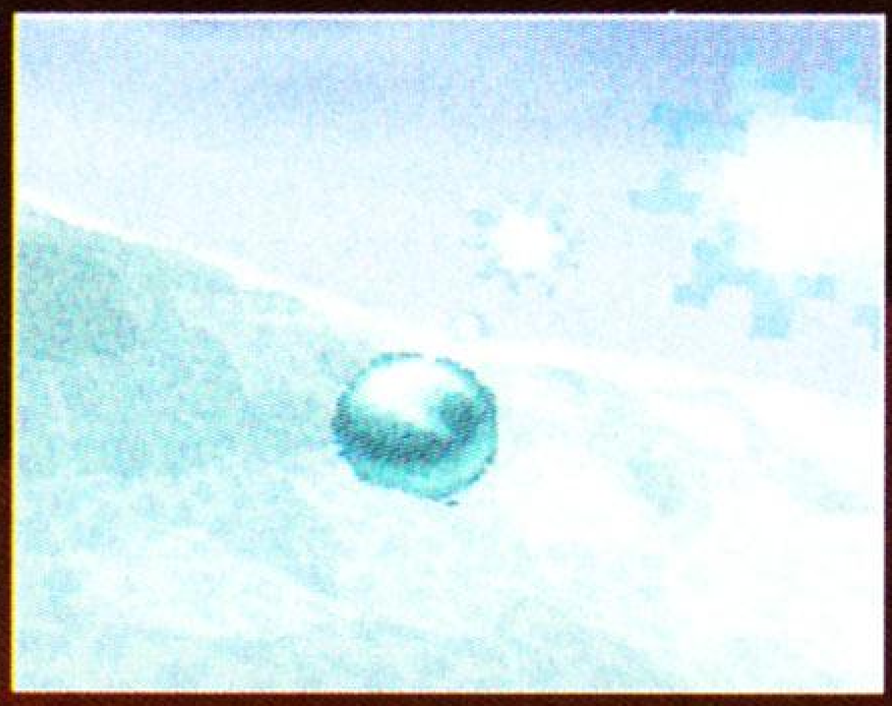
Another major part of the Magic Carpet gaming experience is the collection of the (initially red) pottery jars which lie in secluded areas of almost every level. These jars show up as jar icons on your All-seeing Eye and area map, and are usually hidden or located in the middle of summoning circles. An important point to remember is that many jars are placed in trigger zones; and a horde of monsters are instantly summoned should you fly your rug in close proximity. Therefore, it is advisable to convert as much mana as you can to build up a towering fortress, before venturing into unknown territory to obtain a jar. These jars hold a single spell which is instantly memorised, and there are a total of 21 different jars to find throughout the 75 worlds.

As you progress through the supernatural lands of Magic Carpet, you gradually build up a collection of increasingly powerful spells, all of which add to your chances of creating a stable new land and leave your enemies struggling to combat your power. Many of the spells are offensive, some are defensive and all are awesome to behold, but remember that the aggressive combat spells aim at the nearest target, so the choice of weapon is more important than any power it possesses. After an extensive **MAXIMUM** playtest, we offer you a complete guide to the spells of Magic Carpet; their effects and ways to use such power.

A COMPLETE ARSENAL OF MAGICAL ATTACKS!

FIREBALL and RAPID FIREBALL

The first offensive spell that you receive is a single shot fireball spell. After a small conjuration, you produce a rapidly expanding ball of flame in the palm of your hand before unleashing it towards an enemy creature or wizard. Fireballs convert many of the lesser entities into mana, but it must be remembered that some creatures (such as griffins) are immune to fire. A limited and weak spell that should be upgraded as soon as you find a rapid fire alternative.



POSSESS

This changes a mana ball into your colour. Watch enemy wizards, as some tend to lie in wait for a collection of mana before changing it to their colour. More than a simple mana-tagging spell, possess also enables your wizard to convert any neutral buildings or villages to your cause.

REBOUND

Upon encountering an annoying wizard, the best policy is to cast a rebound spell immediately; giving you protection from any fire-based attacks a rival (or indeed a creature) may use. This makes a previously cocky wizard think twice about bothering you again.

SHIELD

This deflects approximately three-quarters of all attacks you receive. Useful for casting before you travel to an unknown area of a world, or when you intend to raze an enemy castle to the ground. The only real problem is that the spell lasts for only a short period of time.

INVISIBLE

A relatively impressive spell when used under the correct circumstances, the invisibility spell renders you cloaked in a mesh of transparent fibres, and this almost undetectable by the enemy (unless you launch into an attack, of course). This has but one drawback; the spell's power causes a massive psychic disturbance that all other living creatures can see wherever they may be, so make sure you cast this spell well away from your intended destination.

ACCELERATE

An early spell that proves to be extremely valuable in later levels. This spell can be used in a number of ways, such as selecting the accelerate spell when you are attempting to obtain a jar, and then zooming away from any danger relatively unscathed. Obviously, the spell allows you to cover great areas of the map very quickly, so select it when an enemy is attacking your castle, or when a massive amounts of mana are uncovered.

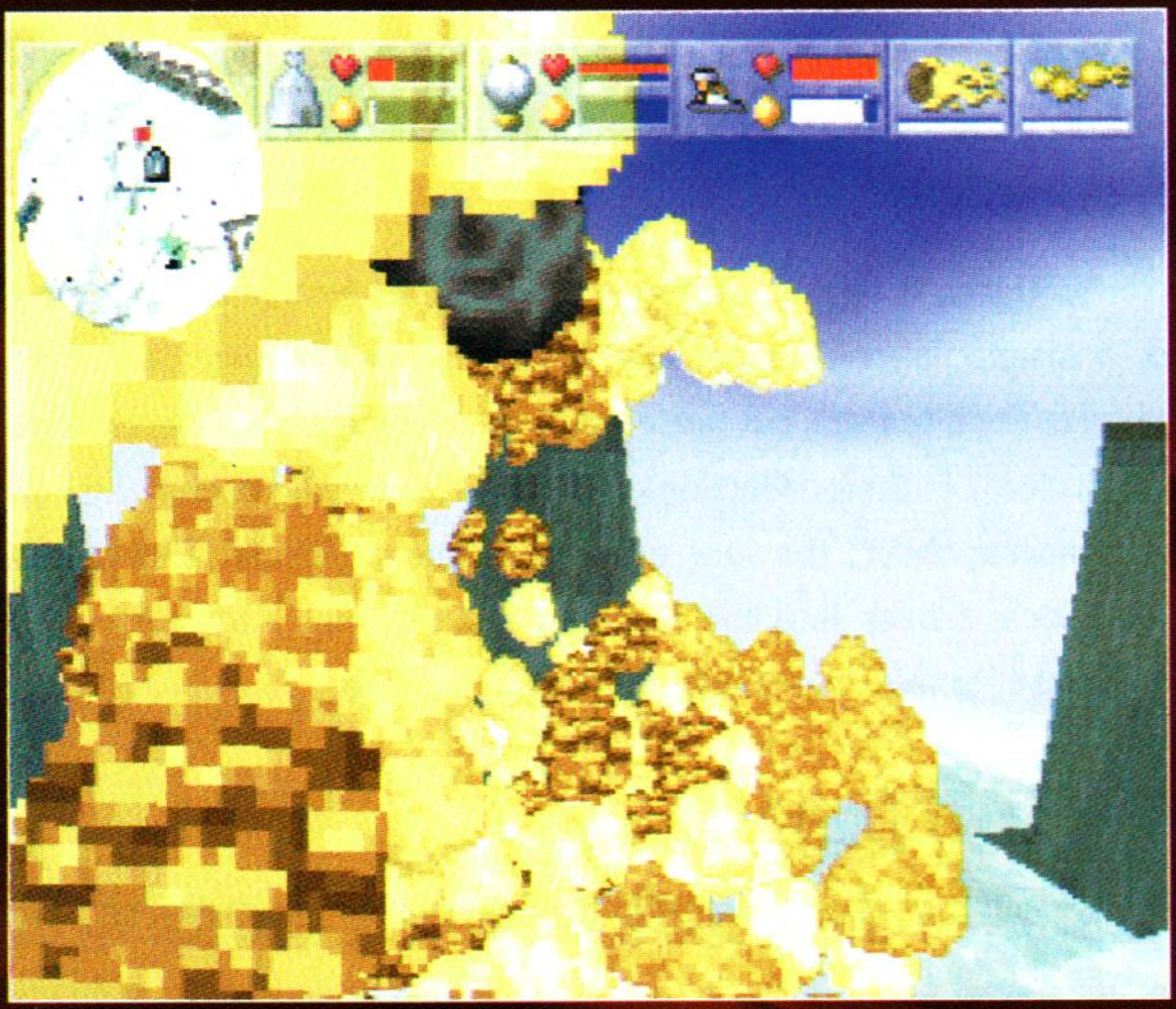
HEAL

A very straightforward (and valuable) spell which heals any damage you may have incurred during your dogfighting. Remember that this spell requires mana, and so only works when you have established yourself in a land, but is useful on major expeditions. Remember that your mana and health levels are restored when you hover over your fortress, so a wise wizard should only employ the heal spell in a real emergency.

CASTLE

This is the very first spell that you are able to pick up, and one of the most important n the game. The castle spell initially summons a tower from the earth (or sea), and this can be extended into a mighty fortress once your mana levels increase. Your mana collection is kept inside your rapidly-expanding castle after being located and transported by balloon, and once your castle reaches a certain level, a number of crossbowmen patrol the battlements. With a relatively high endurance, the castle is central to your continuing quest.

Collect the sacred jars and receive power beyond measure!

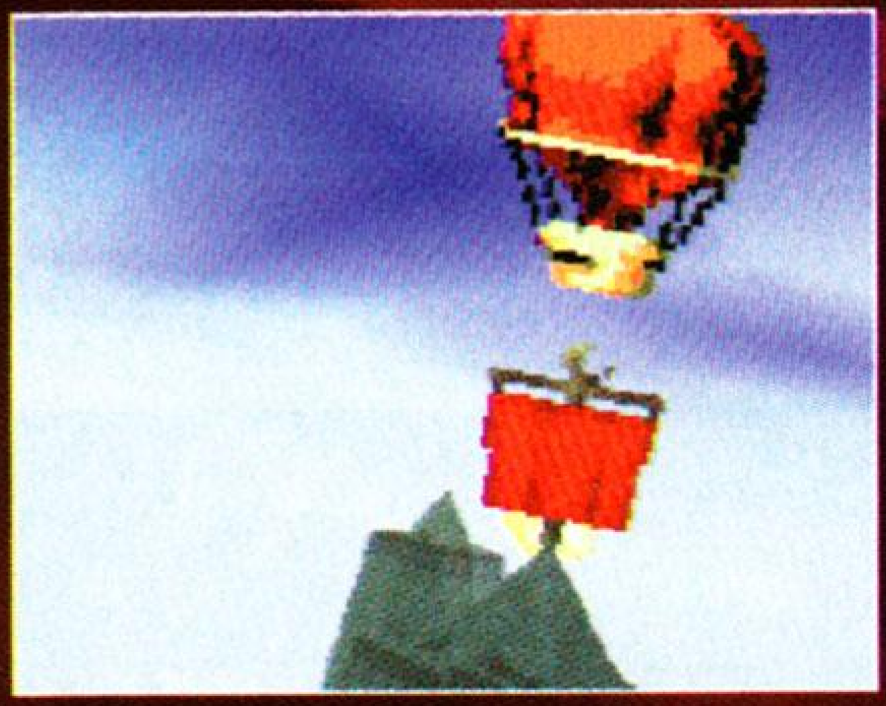


METEOR AND HOMING METEOR

The most entertaining and spectacular offensive spell that your character can possess. A huge a smoking rock is plucked from the heart of the earth and launched towards your intended target. A number of these can level a medium-sized castle, spilling huge quantities of mana which may then be converted and collected. Not only useful against a building, the meteor may be cast at a creature, destroying it utterly, and making enemy wizards think twice about crossing your path again. A special enhanced version of the meteor is rumoured to exist deep in the bowels of the Hidden Worlds, and this has all the advantages of the normal meteor but with one added bonus - it follows an intended target before exploding, and thus is more useful for dispatching airborne creatures and enemy carpet riders.

DUEL

An interesting spell and extremely useful for dispatching a troublesome foe who is incessantly destroying parts of your fortress. Upon casting, an invisible cord is summoned that connects you to the wizard, and then a two-way bungee fight can commence, and an annoying wizard may be banished forever, unless he responds by using the acceleration spell (the only way to break free of this duel).

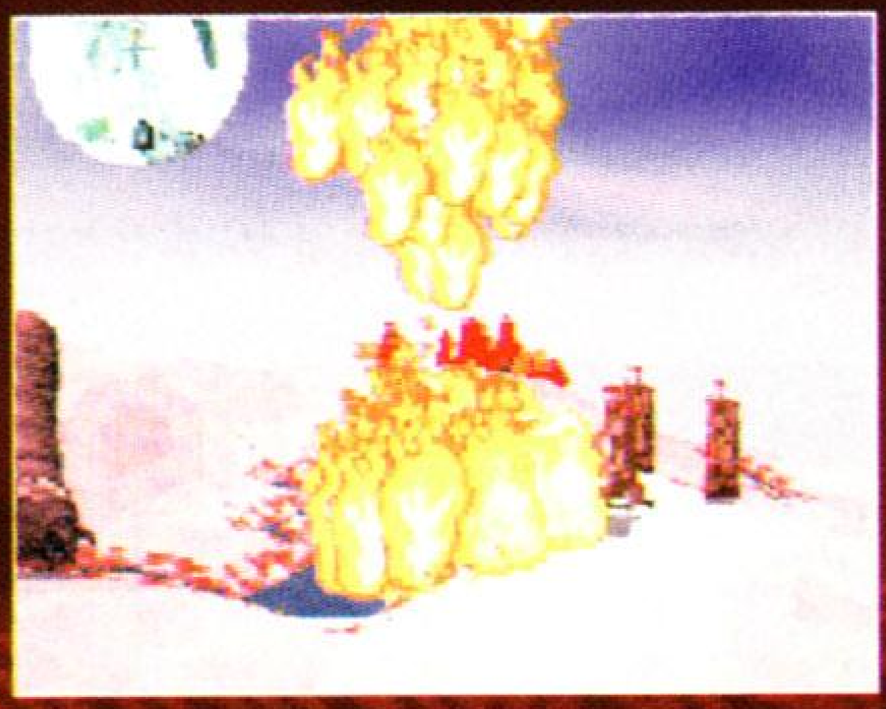


BEYOND SIGHT

Casting this fairly useful spell enables you to detect all enemy wizards on a level, along with any balloons they may have. Switch to the area map to benefit the most from a spell that is mainly useful for detecting a wizard attempting to strike your castle down.

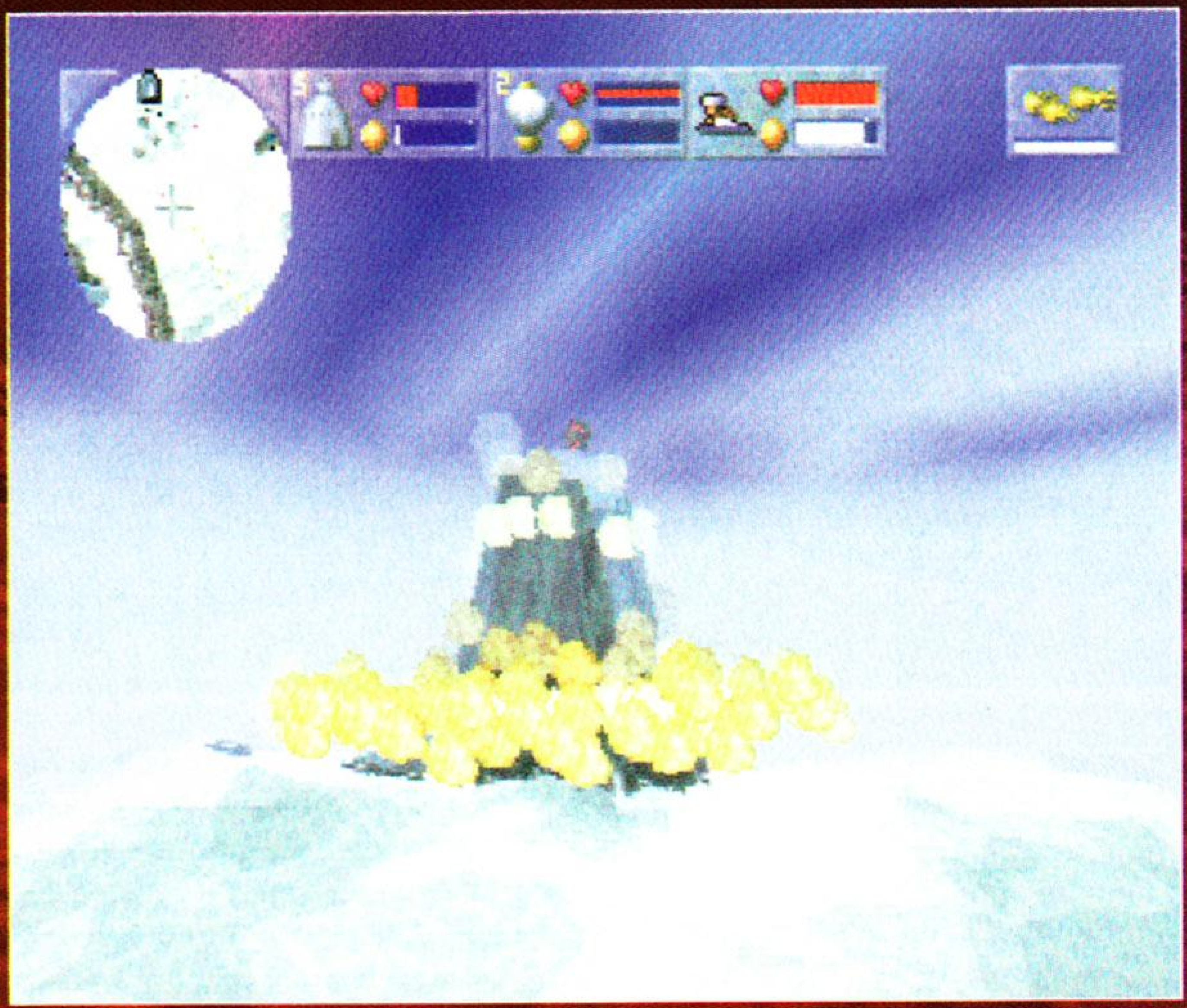
MANA MAGNET and STEAL MANA

A true godsend for the player who has aggressive ideas (such as destroying an enemy castle), as the Magnet transform one particular mana ball into a 'focus' with all other balls rolling towards it to form a huge collection. Bear in mind that some mana may become stuck in parts of the landscape, so launch a couple of extra magnet bolts to change any stray balls. The other spell enables a player to steal mana from an enemy wizard, thus theoretically weakening him, but be warned that such behaviour may lead more powerful (and previously neutral) wizards into a furious rage.



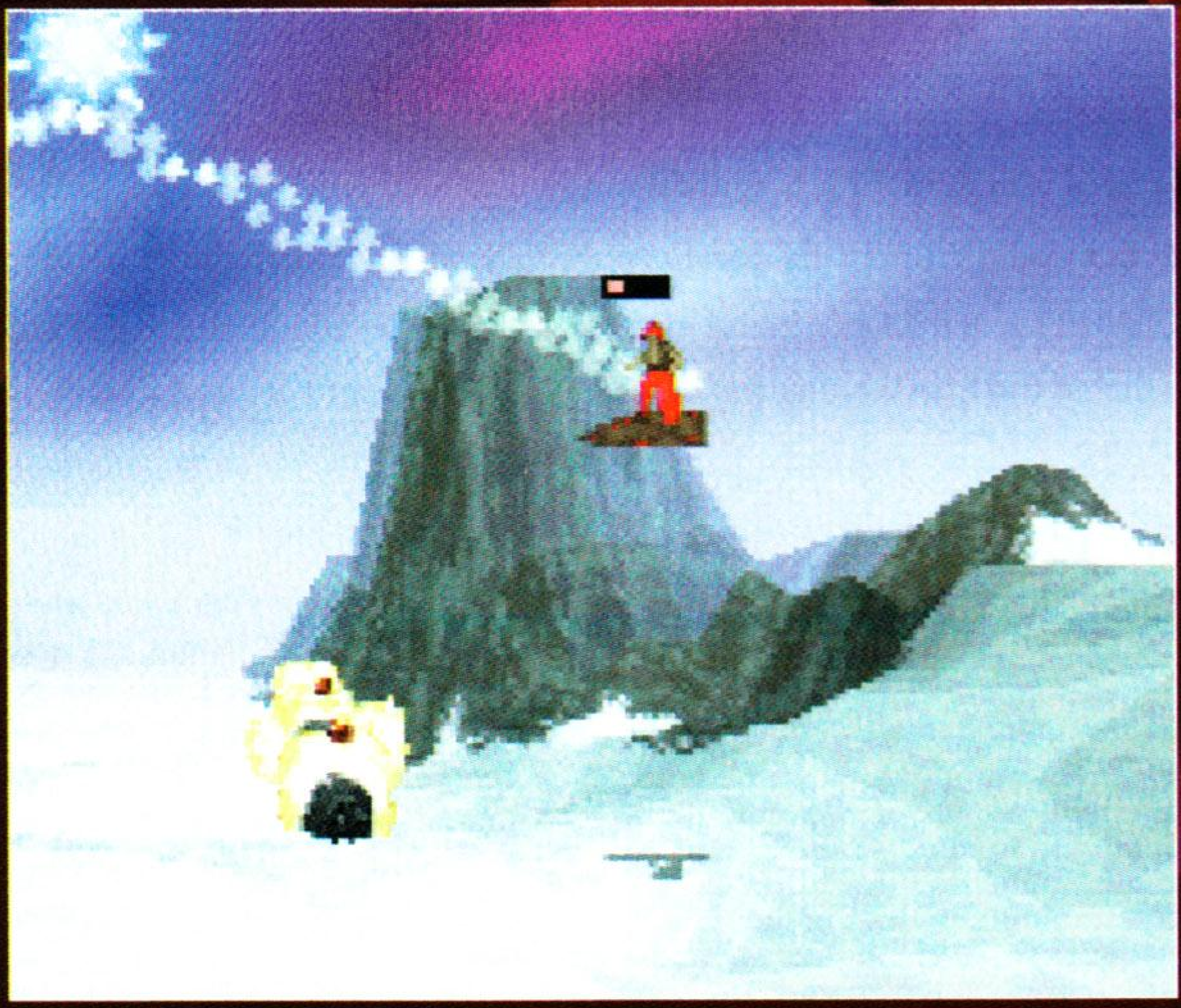
WALL OF FIRE

Affecting both ground and air-based foes, this literally roasts them to a burning charred mess in a matter of seconds. This can devastate whole areas of forests, and the fire may burn on anything, even snow! Obviously, ground-based creatures are easier to hit than those in the air, but a flaming gout of fire destroying a dragon makes for a marvellous-looking death!



VOLCANO

The most visually impressive spell of the entire game by far, this awesome spell should be reserved for truly titanic battles between yourself and a rival wizard (or large creature). As you may well imagine, the volcano spell creates a gigantic and towering eruption of lava and molten rocks that flattens the immediate area, transforming previously serene fields into a mass of fiery vegetation. A castle suffers severely from such blasts, and this problem is further exacerbated by extra mini-eruptions that occur at intermittent intervals afterwards.

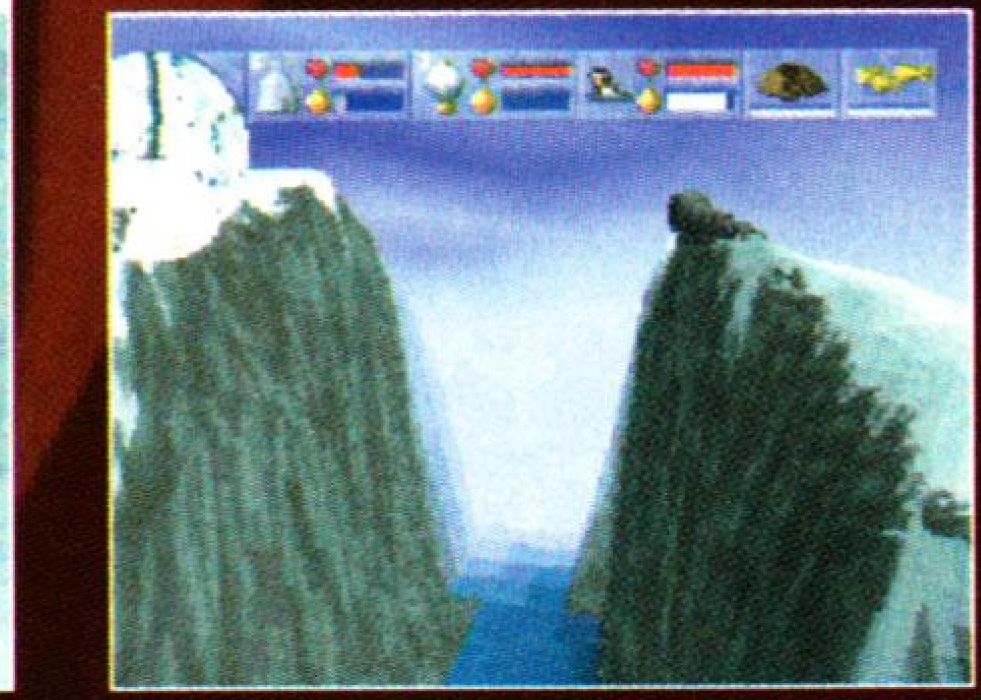


LIGHTING BOLT and STORM

Lightning has many advantages over fire (just ask anyone who's faced off with a griffin), and these two spells serve to remind the player just how weak and feeble certain other offensive spells really are. The bolt fires out a blast of pure electricity from the caster's fingertips, and can destroy most troublesome foes with ease. Greater still is the power of the storm, whereby a particularly powerful wizard summons the element to create a lightning ball. Initially silent, the ball suddenly erupts, showering every living being (and undead for that matter) in a barrage of electricity. This storm is an excellent offensive spell and proved to be at the heart of any advanced combat.

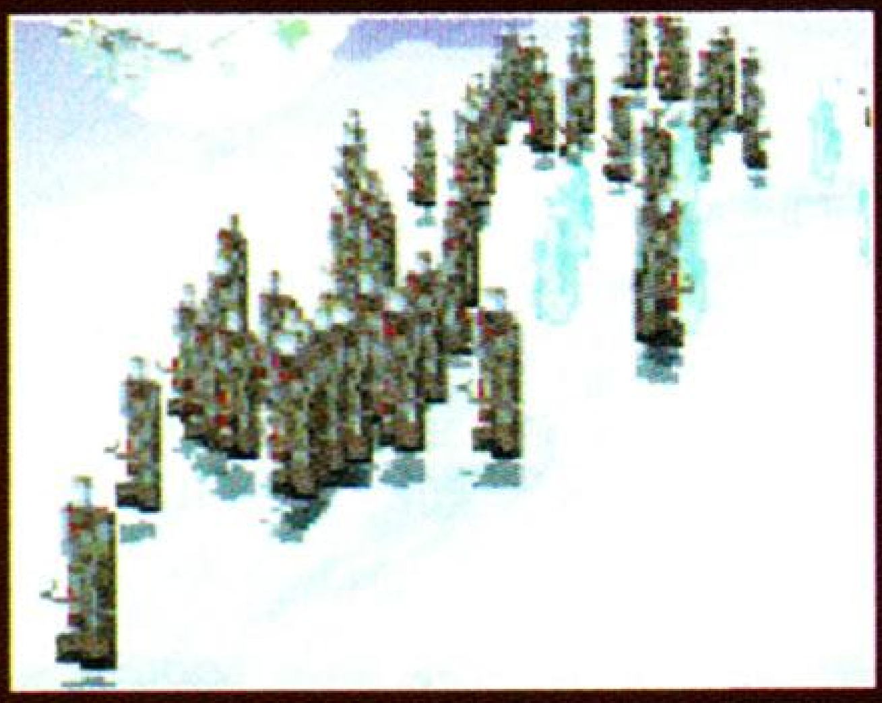
TELEPORT

This whisks a roving wizard straight back to his home fortress, and this is a very useful spell for a multitude of reasons. Firstly, he may return to stop the destruction of his beloved castle, or may flit back to the safety of his stronghold when nearing death. The other feature of this spell is that it may be cast again, and transports you back to your previous point, where you may continue your quest. A good way to use this spell is to stock up on mana, scoot off to damage an enemy castle, launch everything at it and then teleport back before returning to continue the carnage.



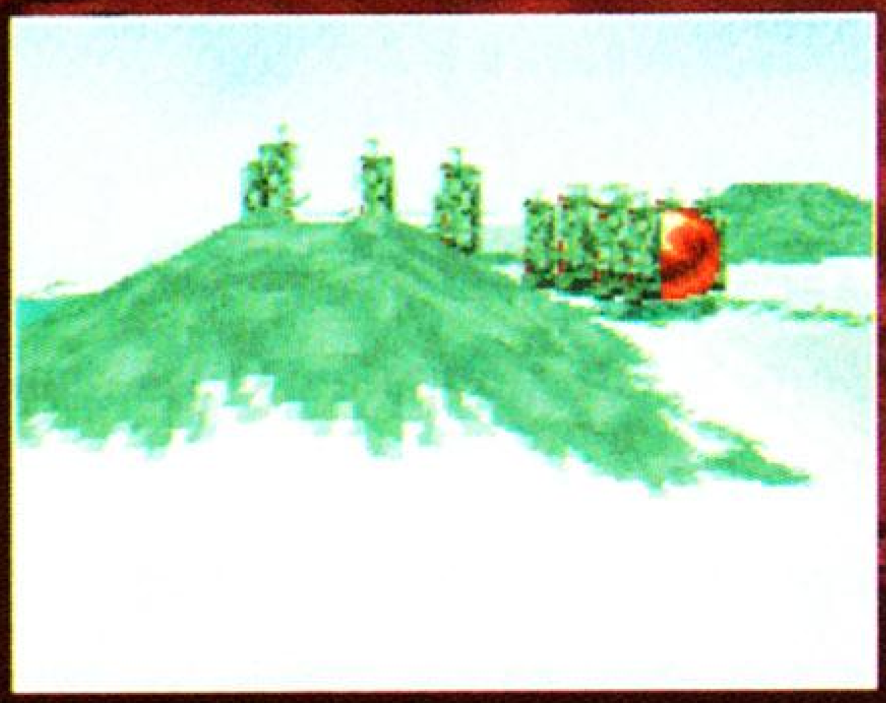
EARTHQUAKE and CRATER

The earthquake creates a huge gaping crevasse directly in front of you, destroying any building in the surrounding area, and causing any land-based creatures to become slightly stunned. Another earthquake cast in the same area lowers the ravine still further, until the land reaches seas level. At this point, any land-dwellers caught in the ravine are sucked under the water, and change into valuable mana. The earthquake creates a seismic disturbance many miles in length, and this may give an enemy wizard a considerable headache. A less powerful version of the spell is the crater which acts in the same manner, save for the fact that the ground disturbance is circular in shape.



SKELETON ARMY

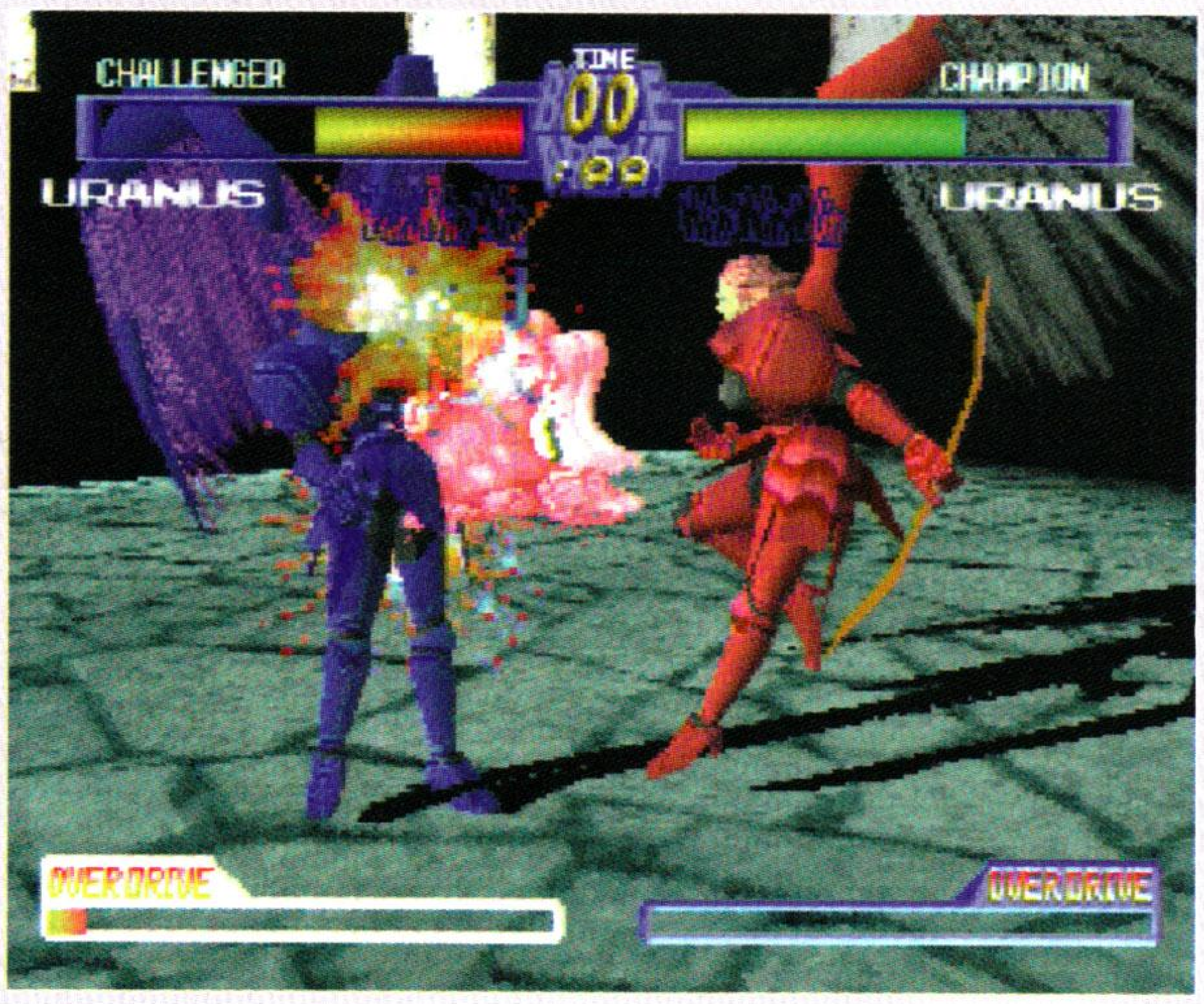
This causes the emergence of a group of undead archers. This spell can be repeated until the army number around 30 bony chaps. These decaying gentlemen have but one thought; to destroy anything in their path, so summon them next to an enemy fortress to keep a rival wizard busy. A final word of warning: Never summon these ethereal folk near to your castle, as they blindly follow their killing instinct.



GLOBAL DEATH

Last but definitely not least is the subtly titled global death. Simply point your shagpile in the direction of an enemy (or group of enemies) and fire. A strange noise indicates the spell is released, and this is followed by a flash of green light. Then all the enemies facing you disintegrate - this spell isn't called global death for nothing! Although eating into your mana reserves, global death is an excellent spell to use, and is perhaps the most powerful in the game - providing you can get your enemy to face you!

Discover the secrets of TOSHINDEN 2 - Uranus, Master, Sho and Vermilion are yours to control!!

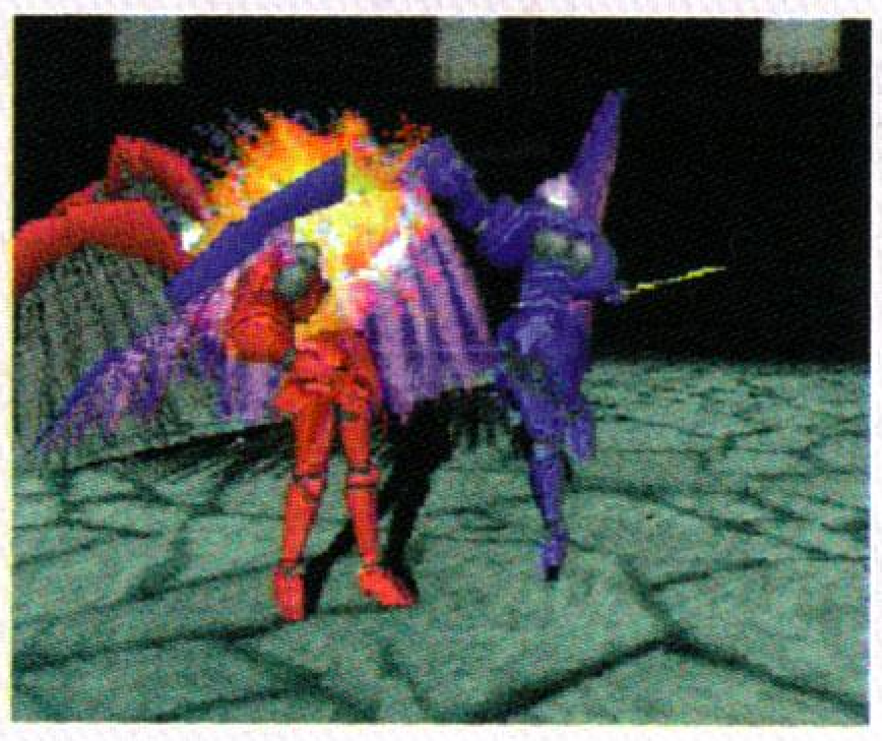


As you may have gathered by now, Toshinden 2 came as something of a disappointment, especially when the breathtaking Soul Edge came to our attention, but those PlayStation owners who already have Toshinden 2 in their collections still have one feature of the game to get excited about; the four extra tournament players. This brings Toshinden 2 back into the limelight momentarily, and adds more enjoyment to this flawed but entertaining release...

URANUS - The bringer of light and goodness descends to halt a reprobate!

The Angel of Eternal Light has flown down to the mortal earth after she heard mutterings by Chaos, the agent of terror. After an unforgivable utterance, Uranus appeared from the ether intent on halting this evil clown, and also acts as a guardian to the Master's inner shrine. The being she serves, however, is of much greater stature than a sword-carrying midget, but her mission objectives state that she must challenge all warriors in case the cunning Chaos slips through her gaze.

Uranus becomes selectable once certain gaming objectives have been met, and this is to defeat the computer on one-player mode after setting the difficulty level to six or higher. In combat, she becomes a highly energetic character with a flying ability and a number of ranged attacks. One of her special attacks involves the creation of a red plasma ball with little range, but once contact has been made, the enemy is thrown with great force. Her wing uppercut is excellent for combating jumping foes, and her fiery dash finishes the repertoire of a graceful (but ruthless) armour-clad being of goodness.



CHALLENGER
TIME
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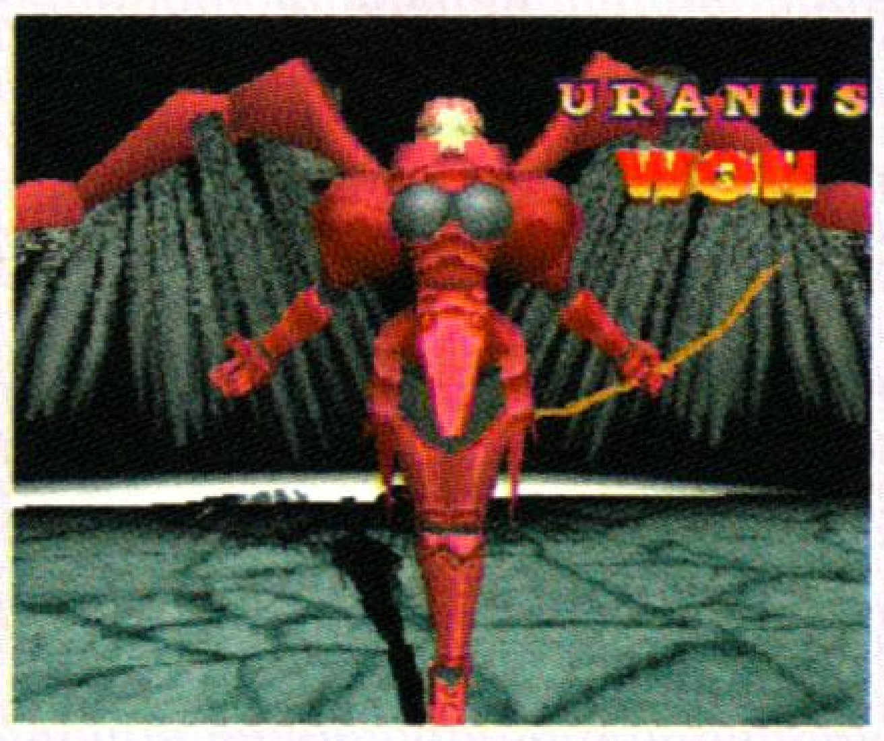
CHAMPION
URANUS
URANUS



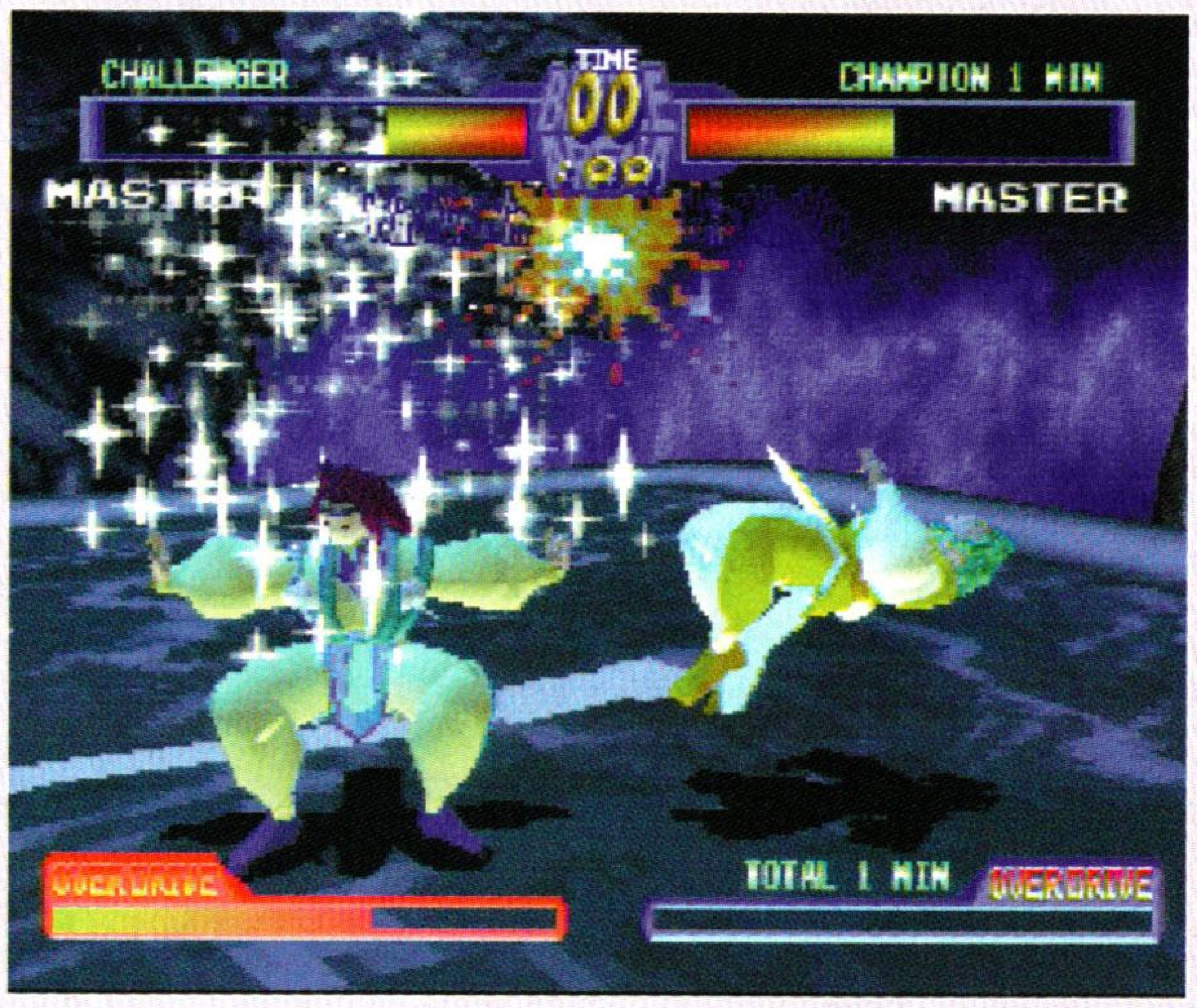
Uranus demonstrates her colour cycling abilities on another clone of her goodly self. Watch the blue Uranus catch her red friend in the chops with a winged uppercut (above left). The Uranus victory stance is suitably godly, and features no bottoms whatsoever (above right).

THE HOME STAGE OF URANUS - HEAVEN'S GATE

Uranus beckons her rivals to a combat arena around the perimeter of Nirvana itself. The blinding light shining from the afterworld swamps the arena in a supernatural glow, whilst the eternal darkness behind the arena serves as a constant reminder of the fate waiting those without the combat prowess to defeat Uranus.

MASTER - A pint sized heroine with the largest sword known to humanity!

The ancestors of the Turkish dancing waif known as Ellis were somewhat strange, possessing fantastic psychic and combat abilities throughout their lives. The psychic bonding between these supernatural entities was so strong that the secrets of utilising such inner magic had to be carefully controlled. Upon hearing that Ellis was entering the competition, a spirit guide was summoned by the consciousness of her ancestors to aid her, as she does not understand the full extent of her abilities, the Master appeared, summoning the rivals of Ellis to their watery doom, whilst challenging Ellis herself to a bout of combat should she prove herself.



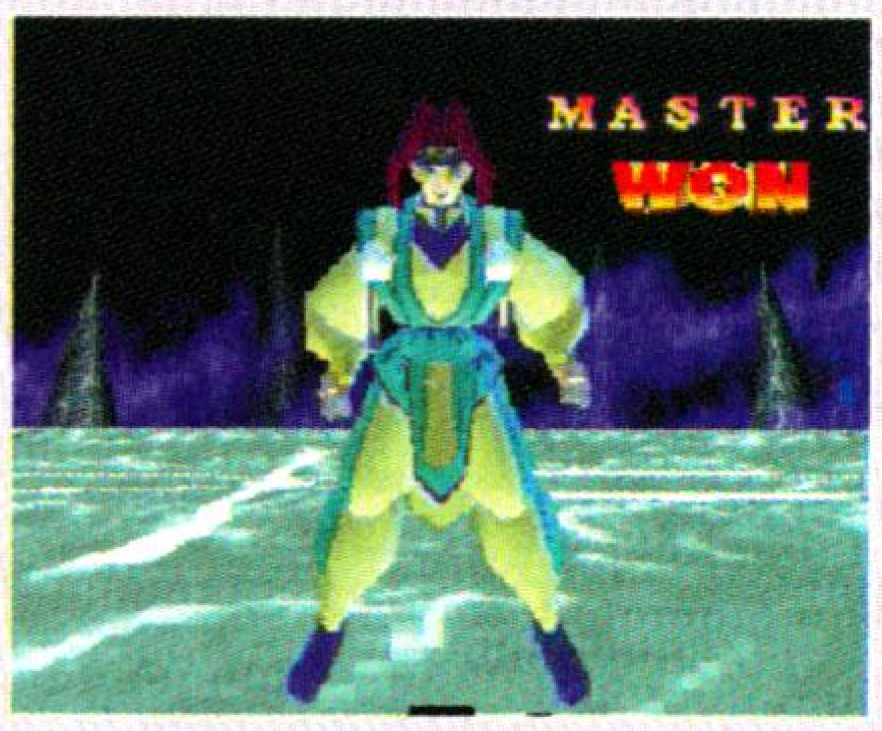
Master not only surfs her sword when she achieves a final victory, but also clenches her fists and floats slightly. She also causes a great deal of hurting to her opponent with her excellent special death move, where she tip-toes in the air, sprinkles magic dust about her and then executes her foe in a bath of plasma.

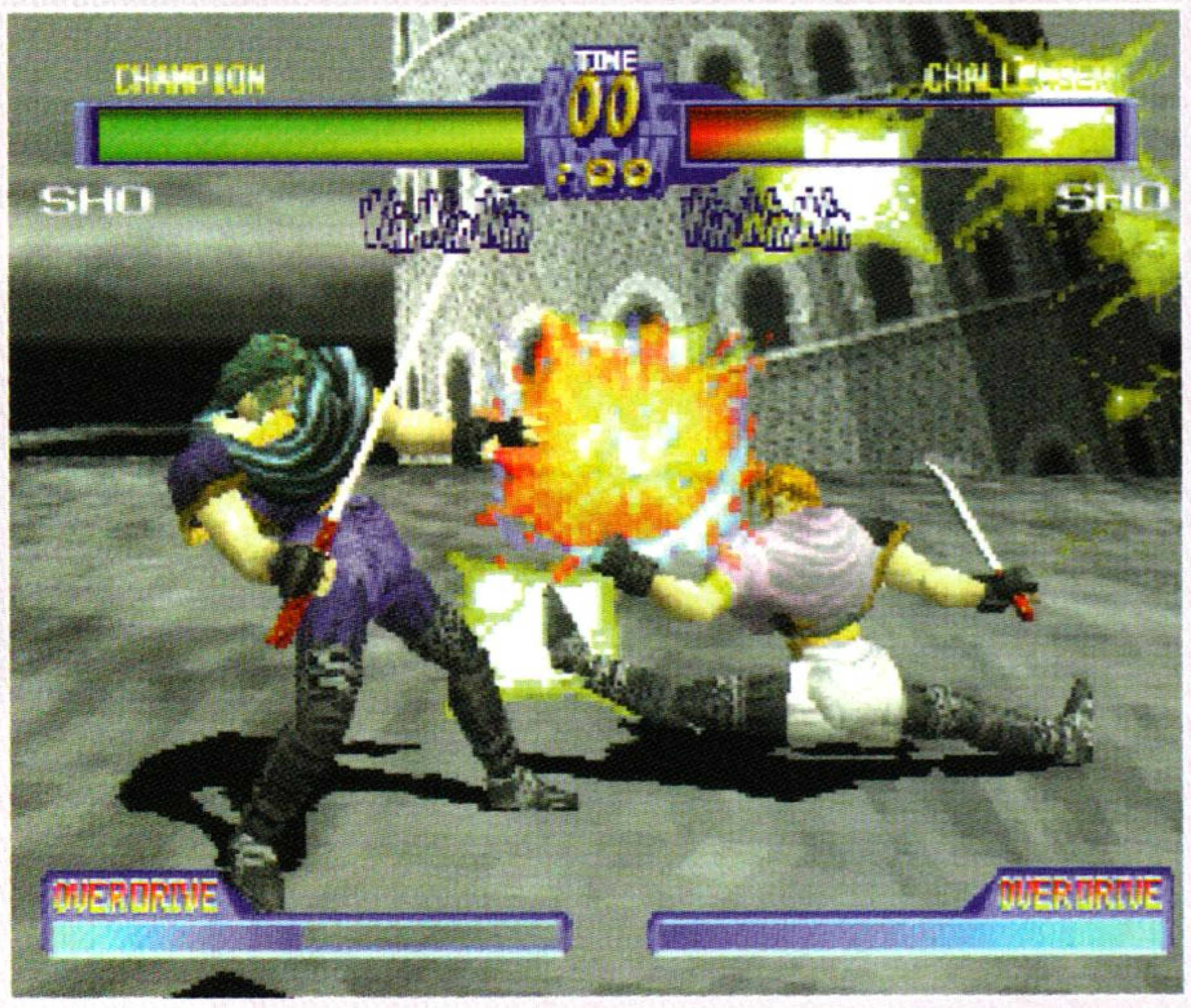
Master becomes selectable at the same time as Uranus, and although looking somewhat puny, her summoning powers unleash a massive combat potential. Her main weapon is a huge sword of light, which she uses to uppercut and stab foes with. A final special move is a sprinkle of angel dust followed by gruff incantations, and this causes a massive energy sap. Armed with such a weapon, the master is almost unstoppable, despite being a difficult character to master.

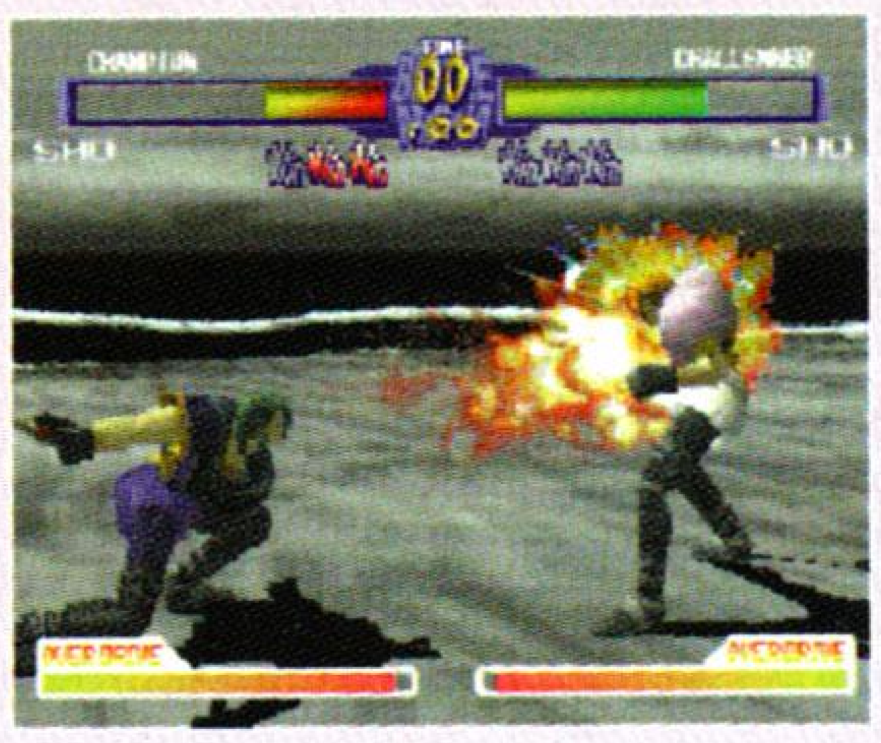
CHALLENGER
TIME
00
CHAMPION 1 WIN
MASTER
MASTER
TOTAL 1 WIN

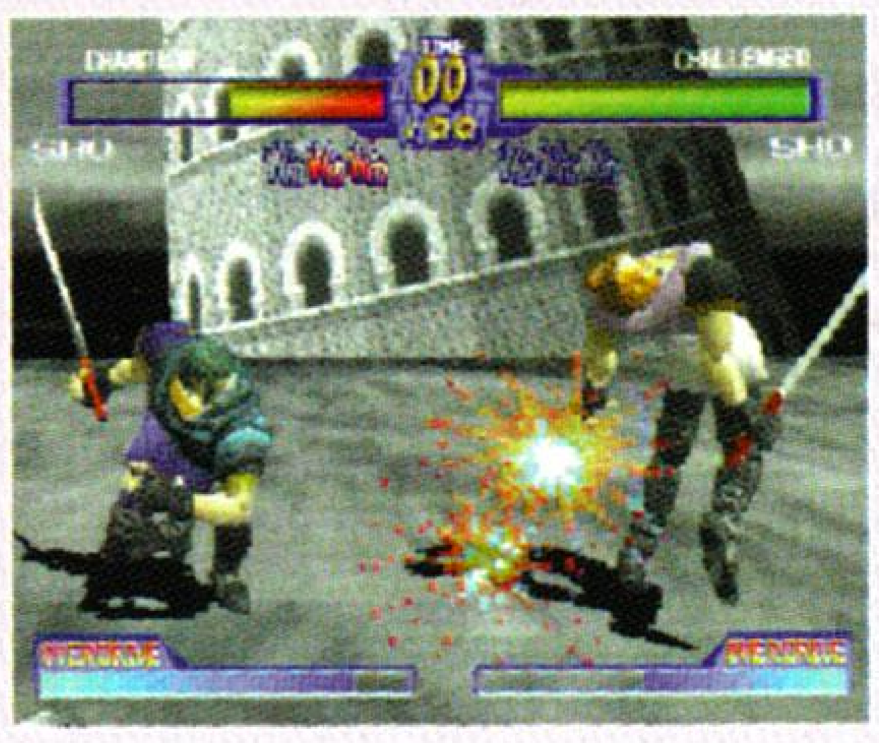
THE HOME STAGE OF MASTER - LAKE OF MADNESS

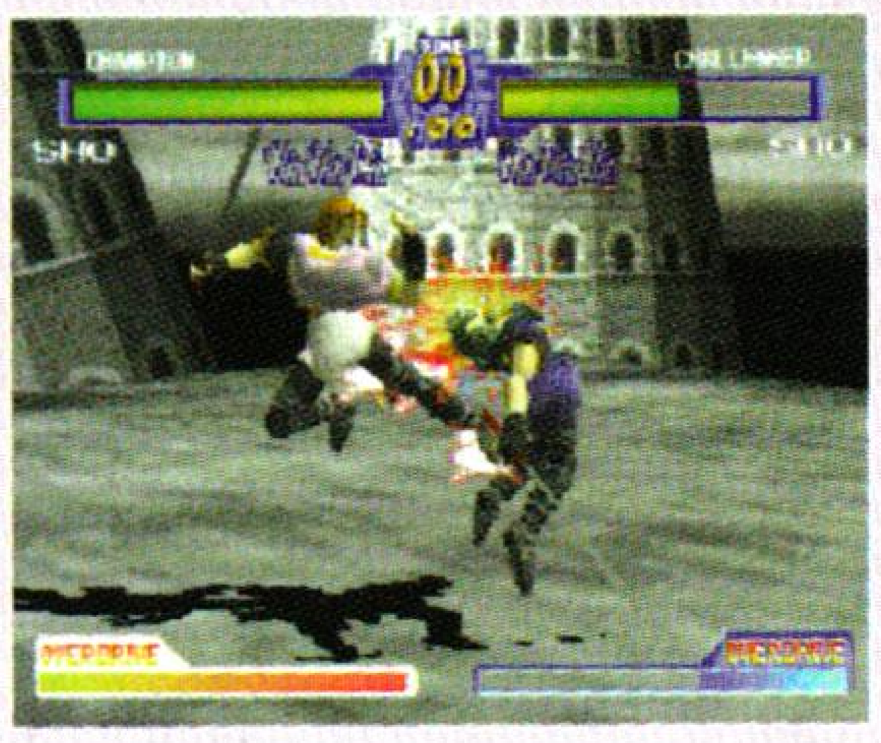
Whilst a deep sea monster watches over the proceedings, Master summons her opponents to an undersea chamber. As the huge aquatic beast surveys the combat, light pulses intermittently until the final round, where a magical burst of fire bathes the arena in an orange glow.











SHO - The flamboyant fighter returns to shake his fist at hopeless amateurs!

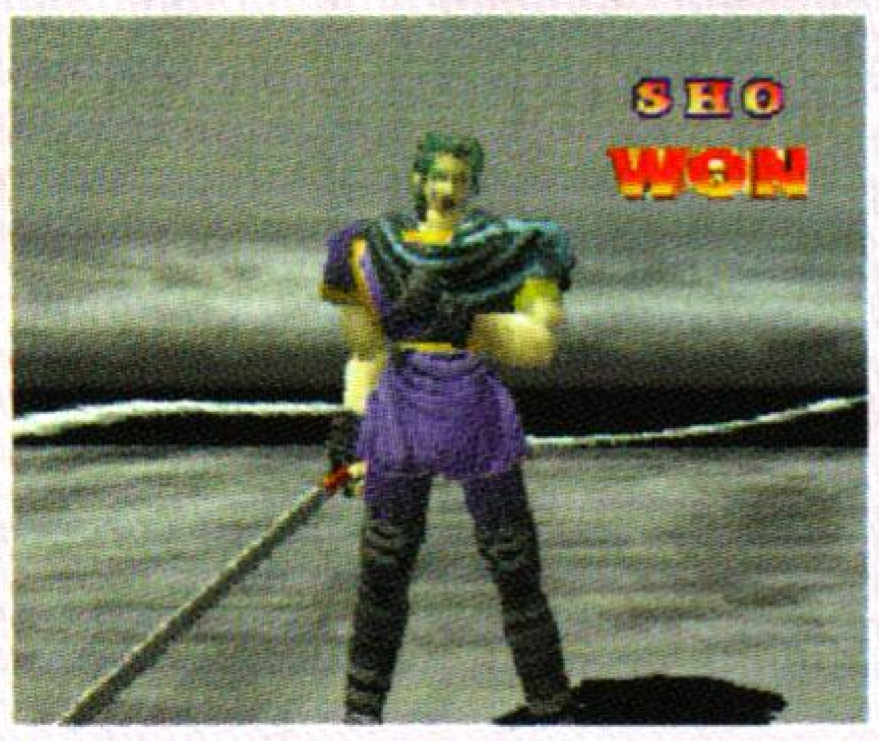
The mentor of Eiji and Kayin returns to challenge all those he deems worthy. Unbeaten in the previous competition, Sho has become a tad complacent in the intervening period, but has kept to his strict training regime that proved so awesome in the first tournament. Sho thinks that the present batch of fighters are little match for his quick combat prowess, and he welcomes any opportunity to prove this claim.

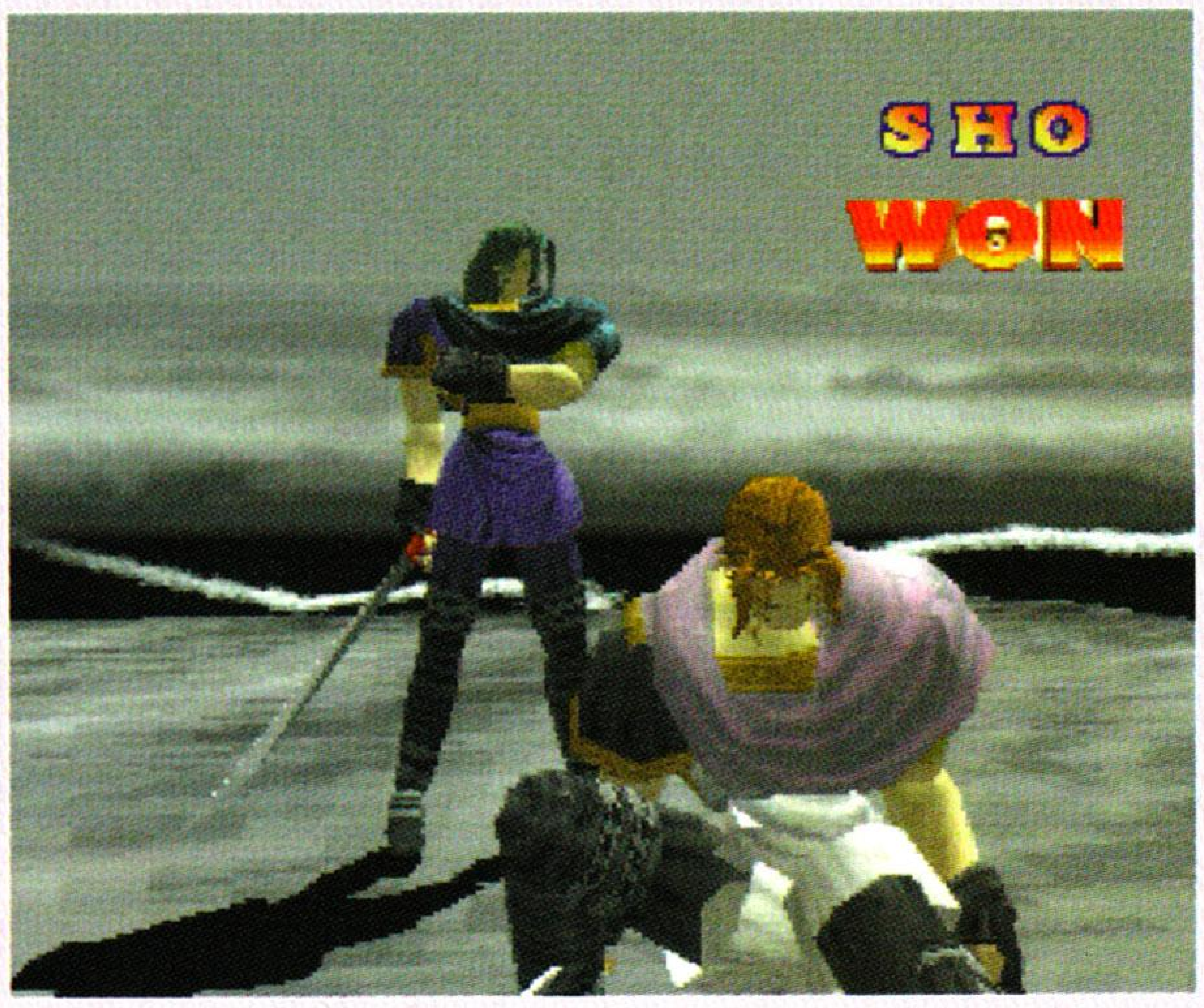
Sho has changed little since his first outing, save for the fact that his rolling dodge has become rather sluggish. His double fireball attack is particularly useful for overcoming foes both at close and long range, whilst his uppercut is faster and more damaging than any other. A couple of improved and new techniques, but nothing to write home about.

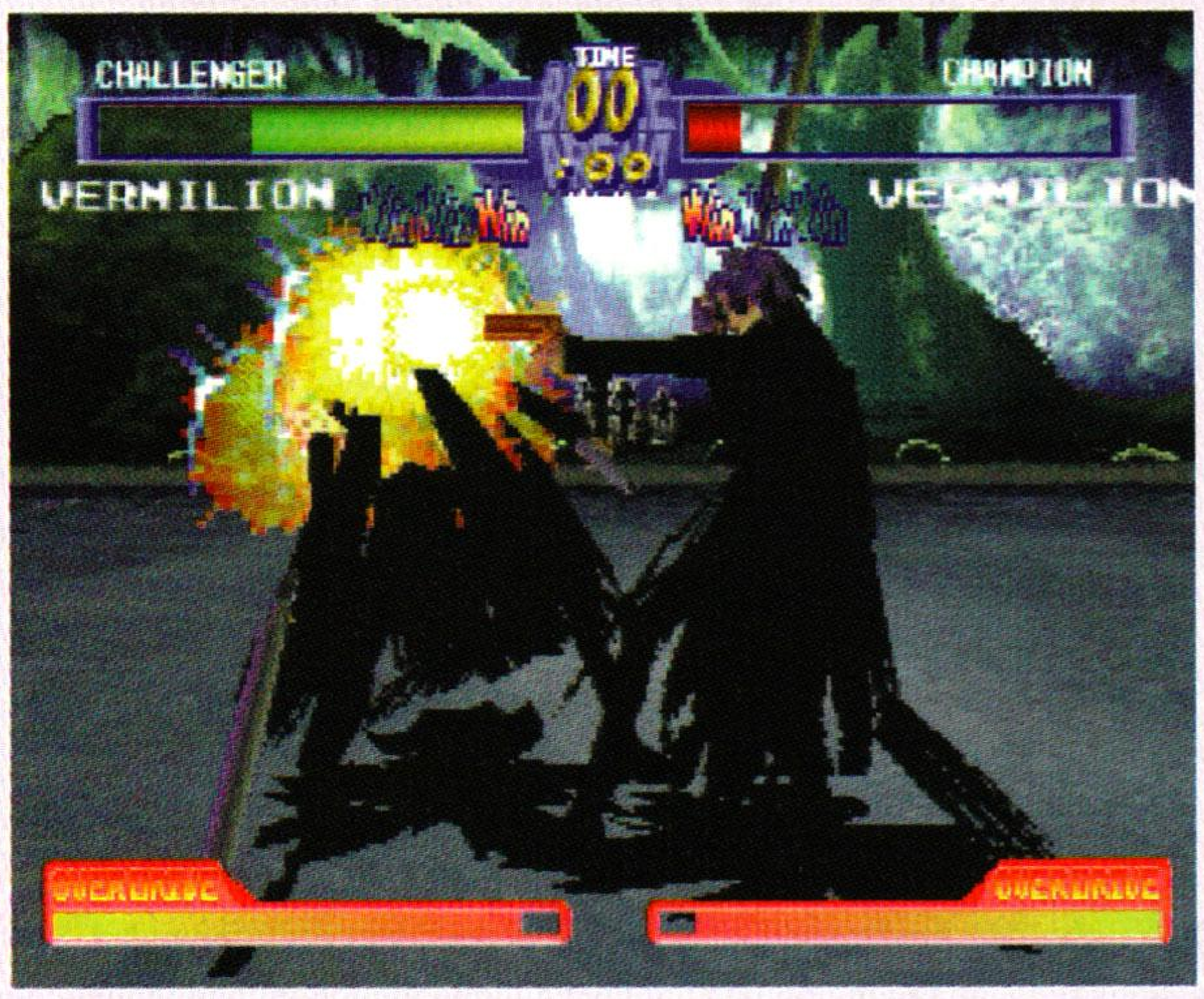
Sho is a master of lightning techniques, as the above sequence shows (above). From left to right, Sho shows his fabled trouser splits, followed by his double fireball. Then he deems the time to be right for a small portion of his sword uppercut before finally leaping into the air and descending with an outstretched leg. Also note the monochrome nature of the scenery.

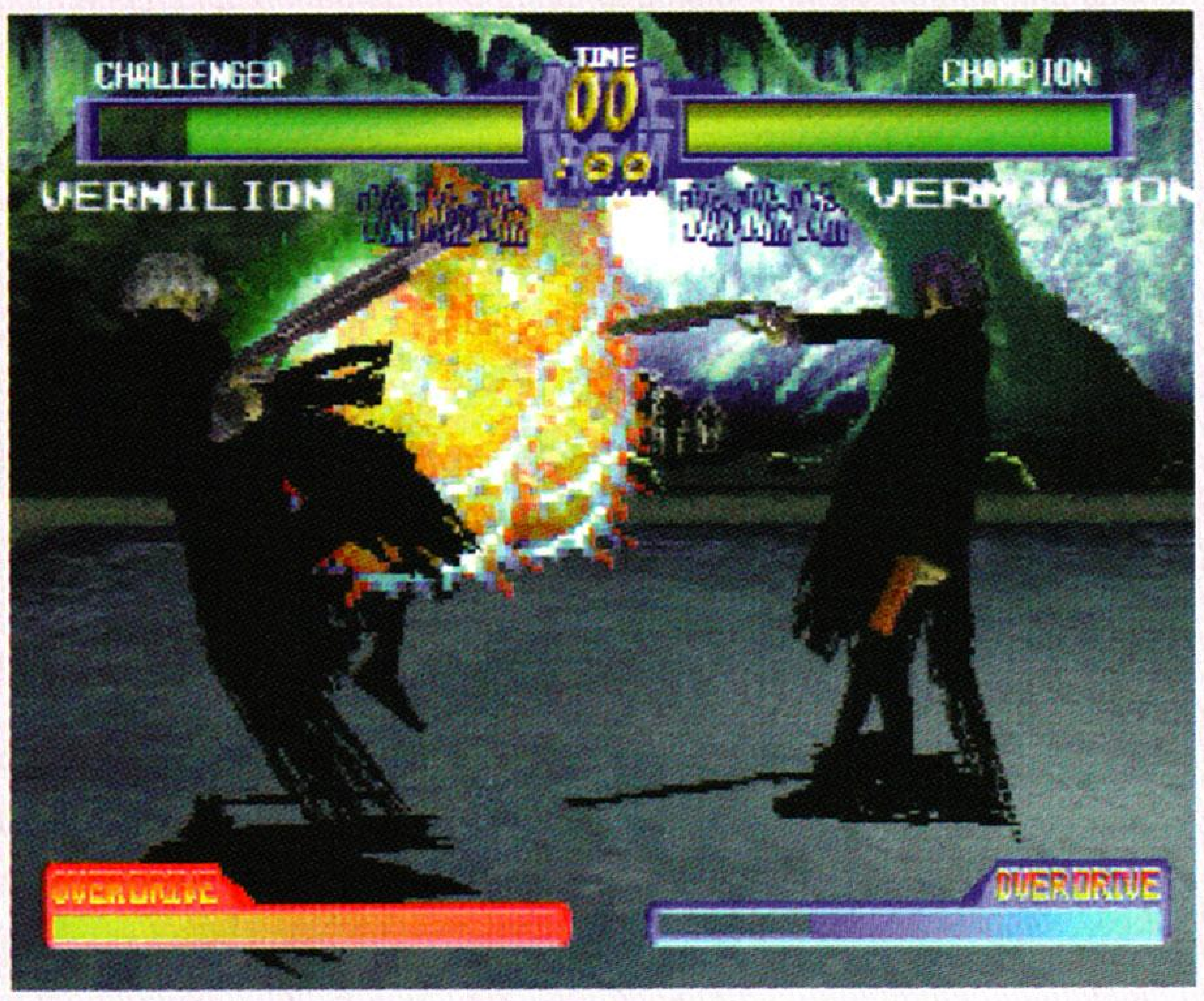
THE HOME STAGE OF SHO - TWISTING TOWERS

Sho's home stage features two feats of architectural elegance; twin towers that twist in unimaginable ways, whilst a river flows in the background. The main difference is that this stage is now in monochrome and the lightning has subsided, leading to a more subdued feel. Unfortunately, the music has also suffered since the last Toshinden battle, with Sho switching from a classical taste to shady rock-based music instead.





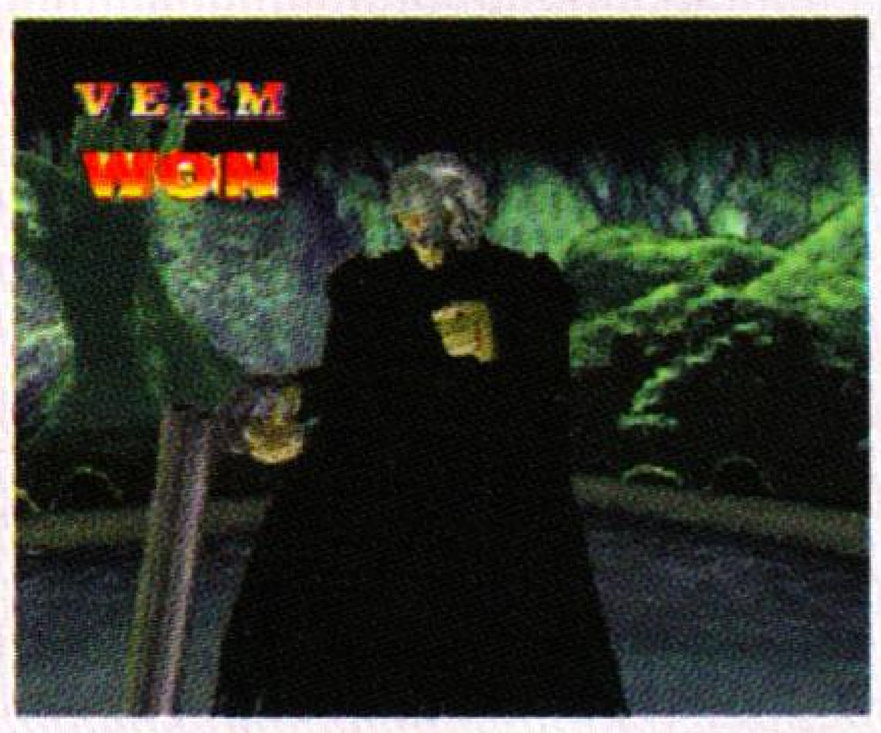




Vermilion tries a spot of sharpshooting to defend his wooded retreat, and his alter-ego is blasted backwards by the shot (left). Also note Vermilion's victory pose, in which he smirks and nonchalantly reloads his shotgun.

Vermilion the Night Warrior isn't the final boss to be found in Toshinden. Have you found this ultra-secret mystery fighter, sent by royal approval?

VERMILION - Lord of the night beckons all to the grave!



The Dark Servant has returned after a thousand years of slumber, and is readying himself for more fresh blood to join the ranks of the undead. Vermilion collects confused souls from dying humans and captures them in bottles. Then he positions these bottles on a gravestone and shoots at them with his ornate and antique weapons of wonder. Best not lose to this foppish chap...

Both Sho and Vermilion become playable once the player has completed the game using Master on difficulty level six. Vermilion is the real entertainment of the game, firing both his pistol and shotgun at a hapless victim whilst sliding about the arena. His tattered coat flaps in the breeze, and his special attack see Vermilion leaping into the air and unleashing a barrage of gunfire on a confused and frightened enemy. A marvellous character that should keep the Toshinden 2 fanatic busy for weeks.

The essential guide to destroying all opponents! Master the combination techniques to humiliate your foes!

USE THE FLOATING TECHNIQUES TO SCORE EXTRA HITS! STAGGER YOUR OPPONENTS AND CLOSE IN FOR THE KILL!

Welcome to the last chapter of **MAXIMUM**'s in-depth coverage of Sega's classic fighting release - Virtua Fighter 2. Previous segments included details on each character, their backgrounds and capabilities along with knowledge of the basic framework of the game and the additions made to it in version 2.1. In this final part, we take a look at the mechanics of the game in greater depth, study the timing of the fight and show you how to exploit everything in the gameplay to give you the best edge. The strategies in this Extended Play are best used on human opponents, although everything holds when playing against the CPU player. Just expect plenty of cheesy responses from your computerised foes. For testing combinations, we recommend setting energy bars to infinite, and CPU intelligence to EASY. Start an arcade game as normal and the majority of your combo moves should counter easily, resulting in bigger floating techniques. But more on that a bit later on.

We'll be covering general VF2 principles, along with some character specific techniques that are guaranteed fight winners. Read on...

Unleash the real potential of VIRTUA FIGHTER 2! The combo masterclass to devastate your opponents!

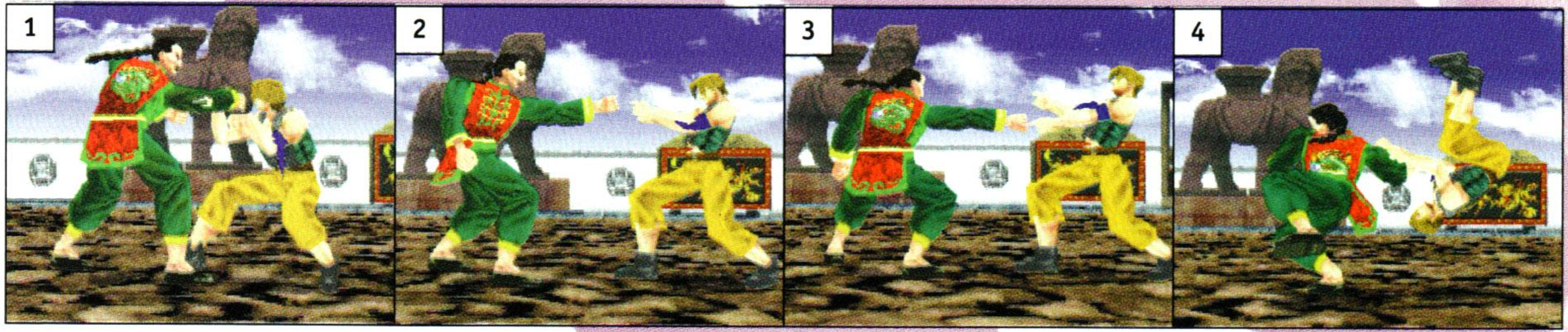
COMBINATION ATTACK STUDY

The true measure of a Virtua Fighter expert is in their knowledge of combination attacks. However, VF is quite special in that there is a total of four different *types* of combination attack that you can use against your opponent. These range from very easy indeed (even beginners should have no problems with method one, below) to the extremely tough (method three is quite tough indeed). A lot of Virtua Fighter combos switch frequently between the methods detailed below.

Method 1. PPPKs and Derivative Combinations

Every fighter in the game has their own "built-in" combination attacks that can inflict a fair amount of damage on an opponent. Here, if the first hit you execute strikes, you can reasonably expect all that follow to be successful too. These are probably the weakest of the possible combinations you can perform on a foe - basically, cheesy PPPK strikes aren't rewarded as well as combos derived from methods two and three below.

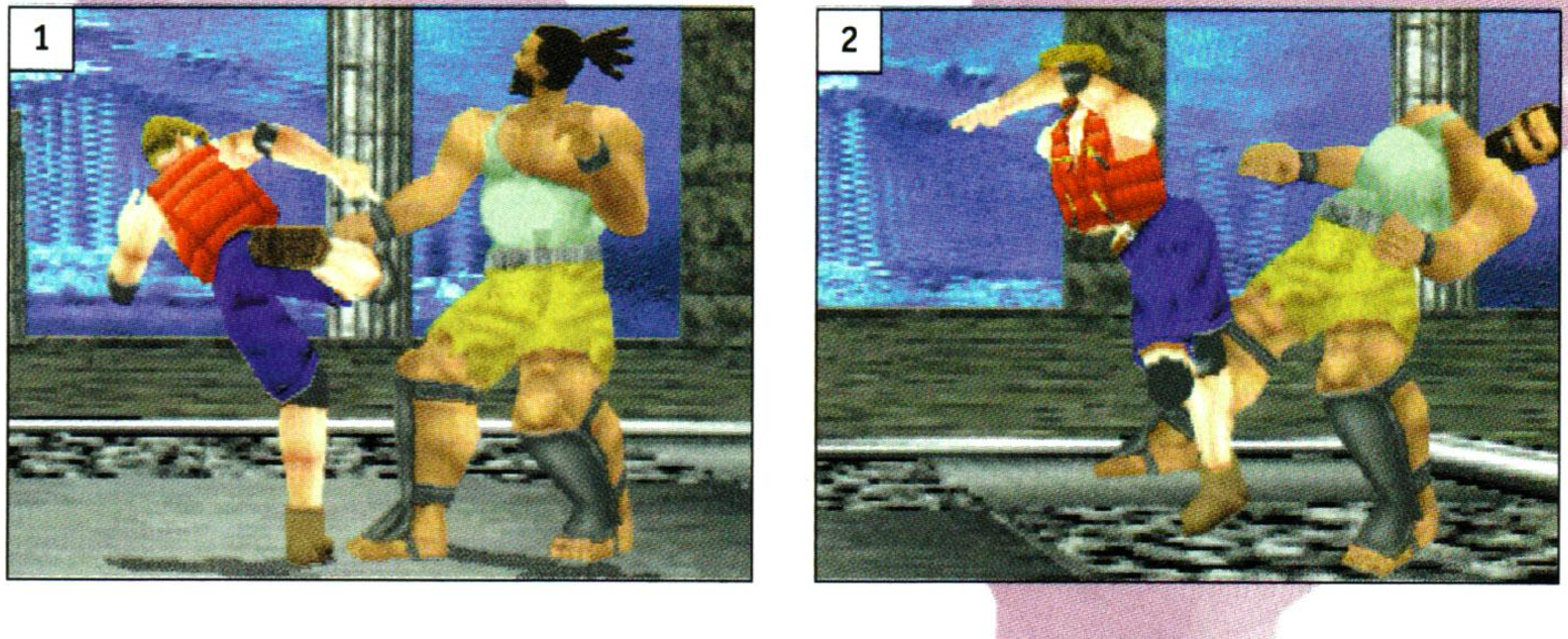
Lau Chan is the acknowledged master of sequential button hitting combinations (PPPKs and the like). A good example of this type of combination is his PPP-D+K triple punch into low roundhouse strike.



Method 2. Stagger Combinations

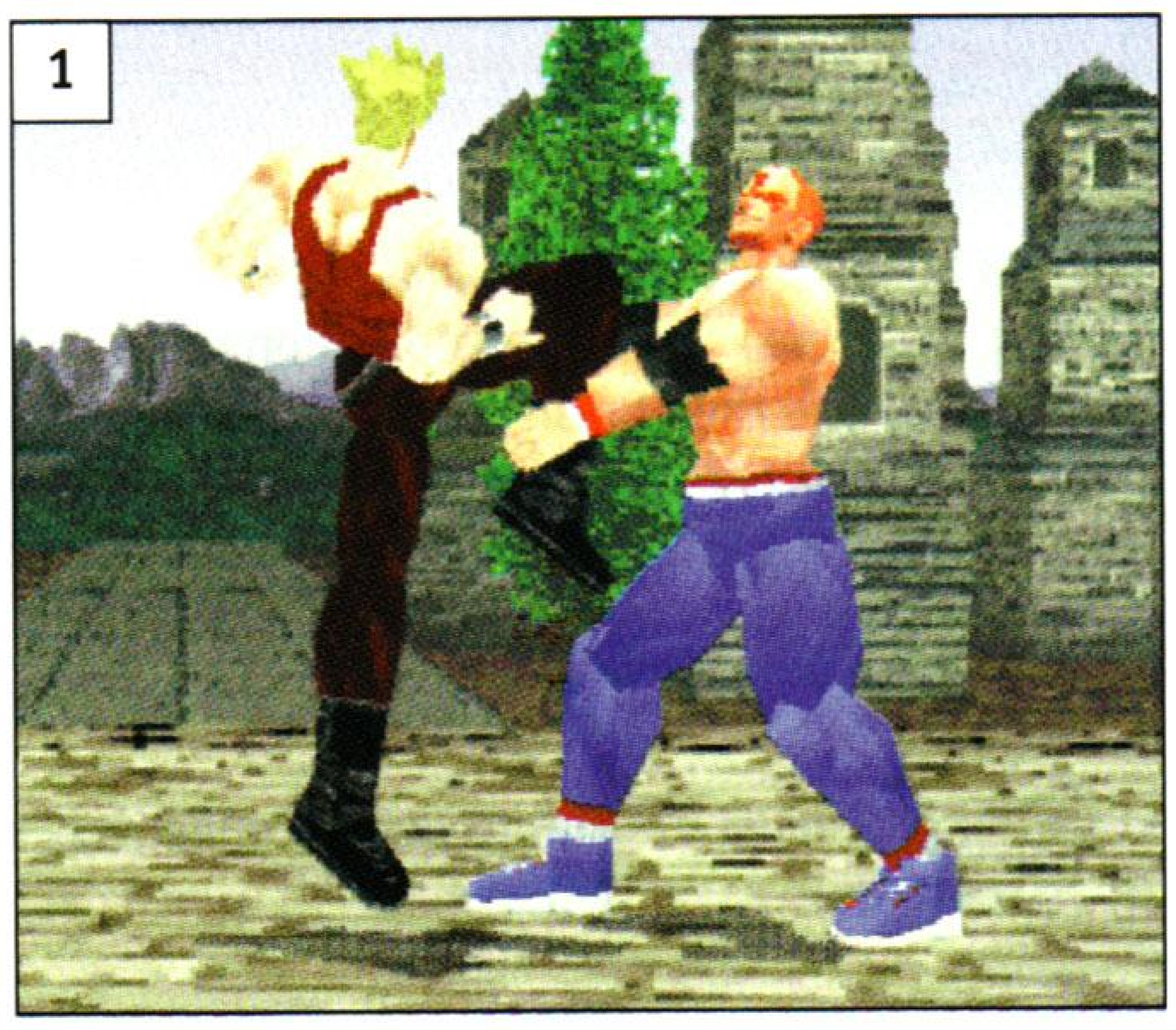
In the last **MAXIMUM** we discussed the different types of stagger evident in Virtua Fighter 2. Basically, for each character you need to find an attack with a recovery time shorter than the duration of the stagger it produces. A good example here is with the side-kick (DF+K on most characters). If this connects with a crouching defender, you can expect them to get up and stagger back, leaving them open to a combination via method one or three. Characters like Lion depend heavily on stagger combinations in order to achieve a good deal of success.

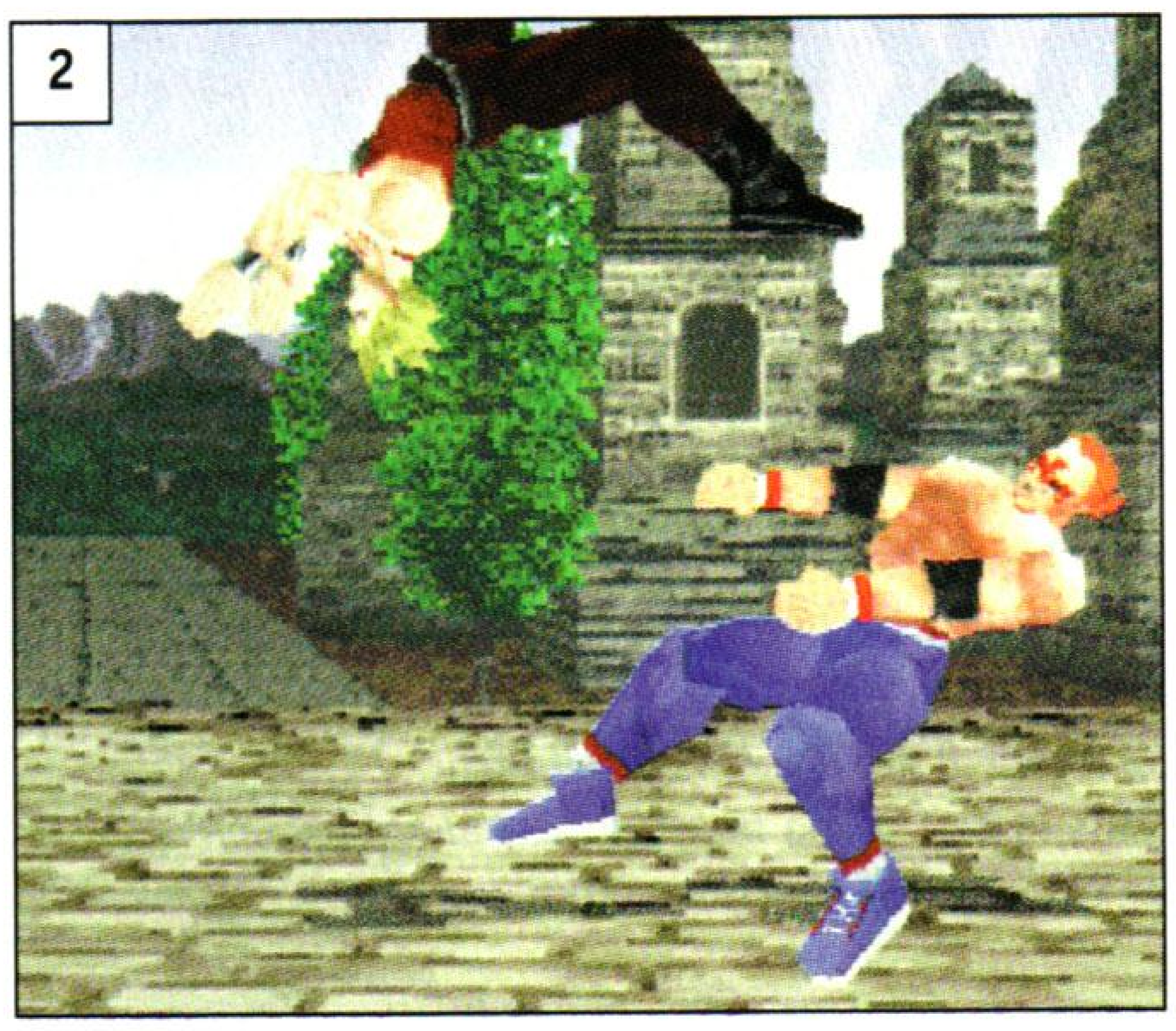
Lion Rafale is great at staggering opponents. Due to the low nature of his attacks, human players often crouch-defend when facing the Mantis Fist master. However, in this position, a side-kick sends Lion's foe staggering backwards, leaving him to follow up with unblockable U+P swipe.



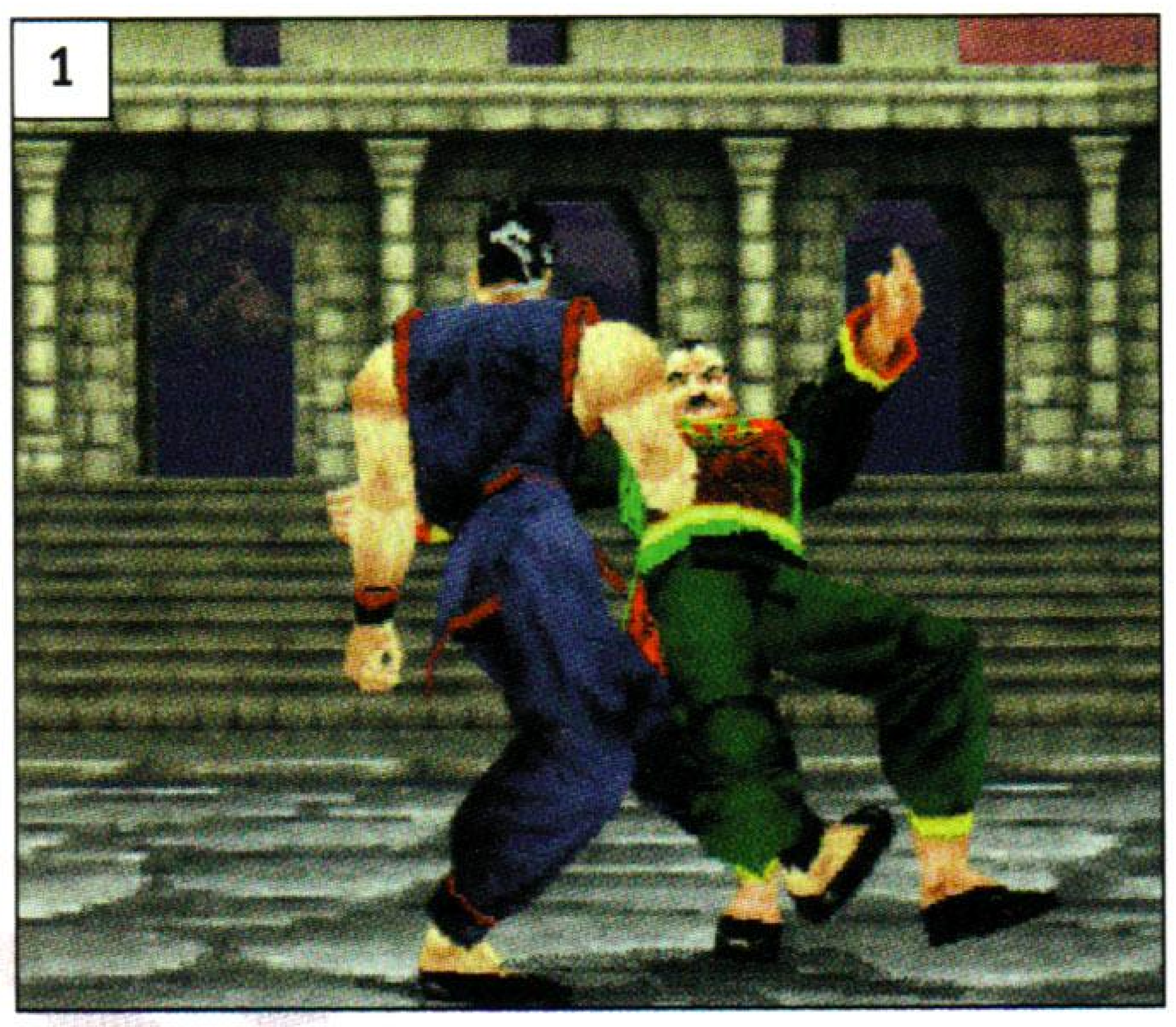
Method 3. Floating Combinations

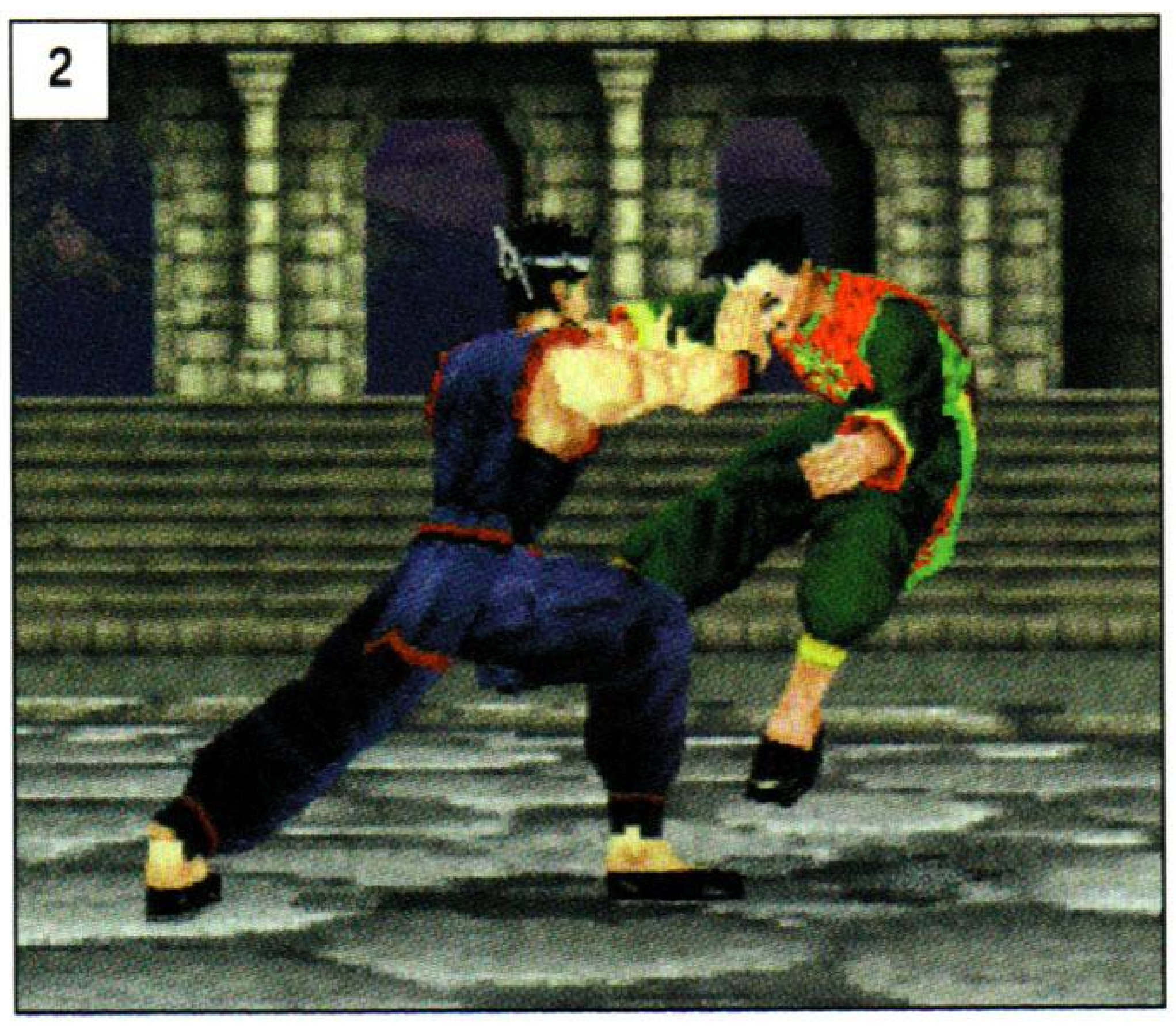
Known to the Tekken fraternity as “routing hits” and often referred to inaccurately as “juggle combos” (this isn’t Mortal Kombat), floating combos involve executing a hit that sends a foe flying into the air. Whilst there, they are defenceless, leaving them open to a power-hit (which would ordinarily be easily guarded and countered) or a combination of the method one variety. Performing these hits is most gratifying but difficult, and accordingly these often inflict the most damage. The success of a floating combination can be gauged according to two distinct factors: the weight of the opponent (those character stats are useful after all) and whether your first floating hit successfully countered an opponent’s attack. If the last bit sounds confusing, don’t worry, we’ll be examining it in more depth later.





One of the easiest and most powerful floating combinations can be performed by either of the Bryant siblings (although only Jacky could do it in VF1). A knee is the staple floating move (F+K) which can be easily followed up with a kickflip (BU+K). The latter move retains its powerful nature from VF1 and can decimate an opponent. Simple, but you can’t argue with the results.





Here, Akira is attacking Wolf with a break-stance throw (D-P+G) which induces a stagger. Keep pressing DOWN and use it to charge the double-palm push (D-B-F+P) which should now come out a lot quicker than usual. These combinations often rely on the first move producing a stagger of some description, making them very similar to Stagger Combinations (method two). However, typically, because of the move buffering involved here, you can hit even if the stagger time is quite short.

Method 4: Move Buffering Combinations

These attacks are perhaps the most difficult to describe, but with some characters (Akira in particular), they can be all-powerful. Basically, these combinations involve striking with one hit and then using the recovery time of the move to “buffer” in another attack, which follows immediately after. Sometimes it’s made even easier because the first attack ends with you pushing a certain direction on the d-pad which is the beginning direction for your second move. Again, it’s difficult to understand easily, but the example should make things easier to understand.

LEARN TO “BUFFER” TECHNIQUES TO SEAMLESSLY FLOW FROM ONE KILLER MOVE TO THE NEXT! SHOW NO MERCY TO POOR VF2 PLAYERS!

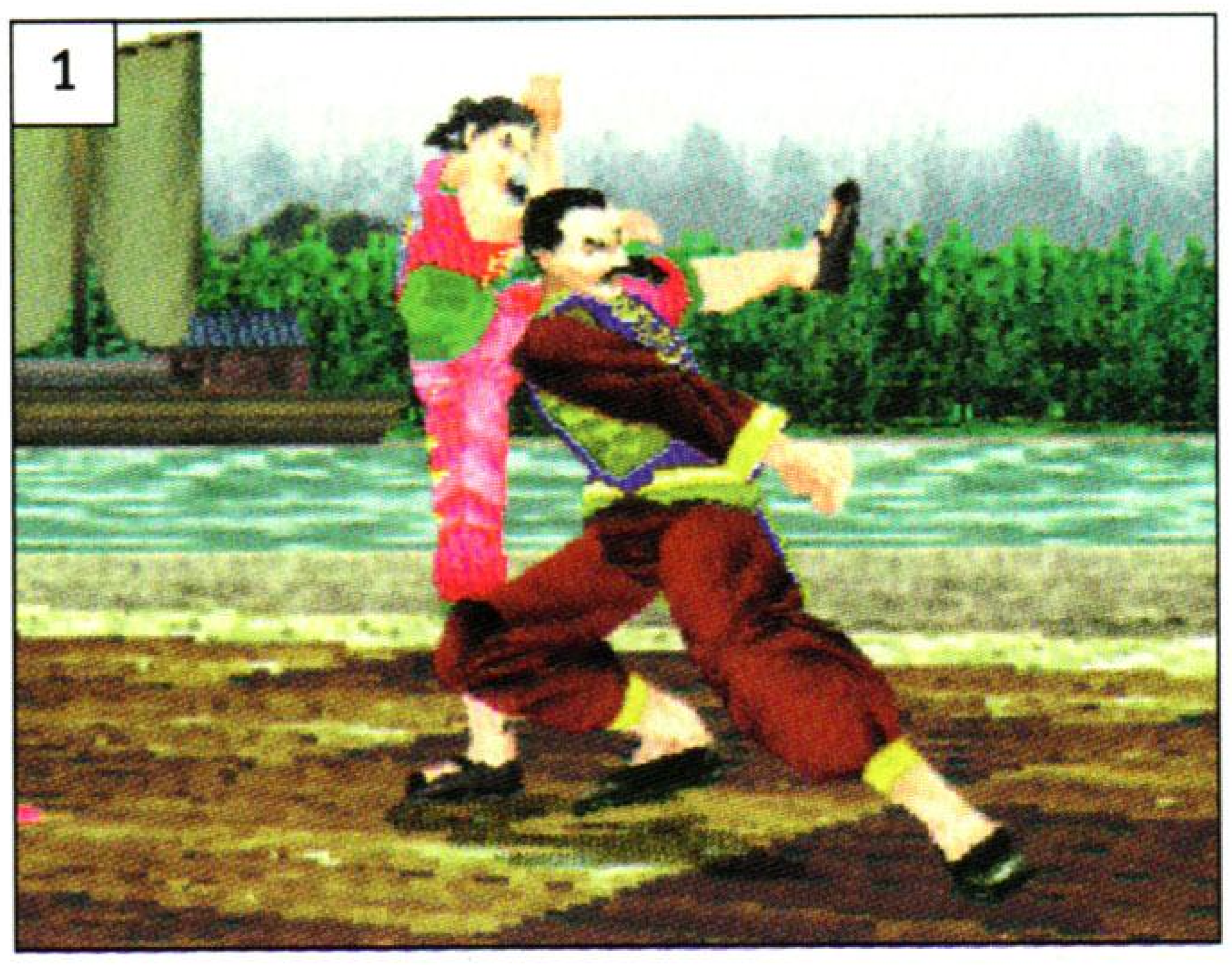
THE EXPERT’S GUIDE TO COUNTERING

Countering is often mistakenly referred to as the reversal techniques used to break out of P+G throws, or the reversal techniques used by Pai, Akira, Wolf and Kage when an attacking party’s moves are turned against them. In fact, countering means hitting your opponent whilst they are attempting to hit you. If you’re confused, check out the example.

The advantages of countering are pretty obvious. Some of the momentum your opponent is using and turned against them and added to the power of your attack. This means that (obviously) you inflict more damage on your opponent. What you might not know is that if you down your foe, they’re more likely to stay down longer. You can tell if a counter has been successful as the impact noise made by your strike is significantly louder than usual.

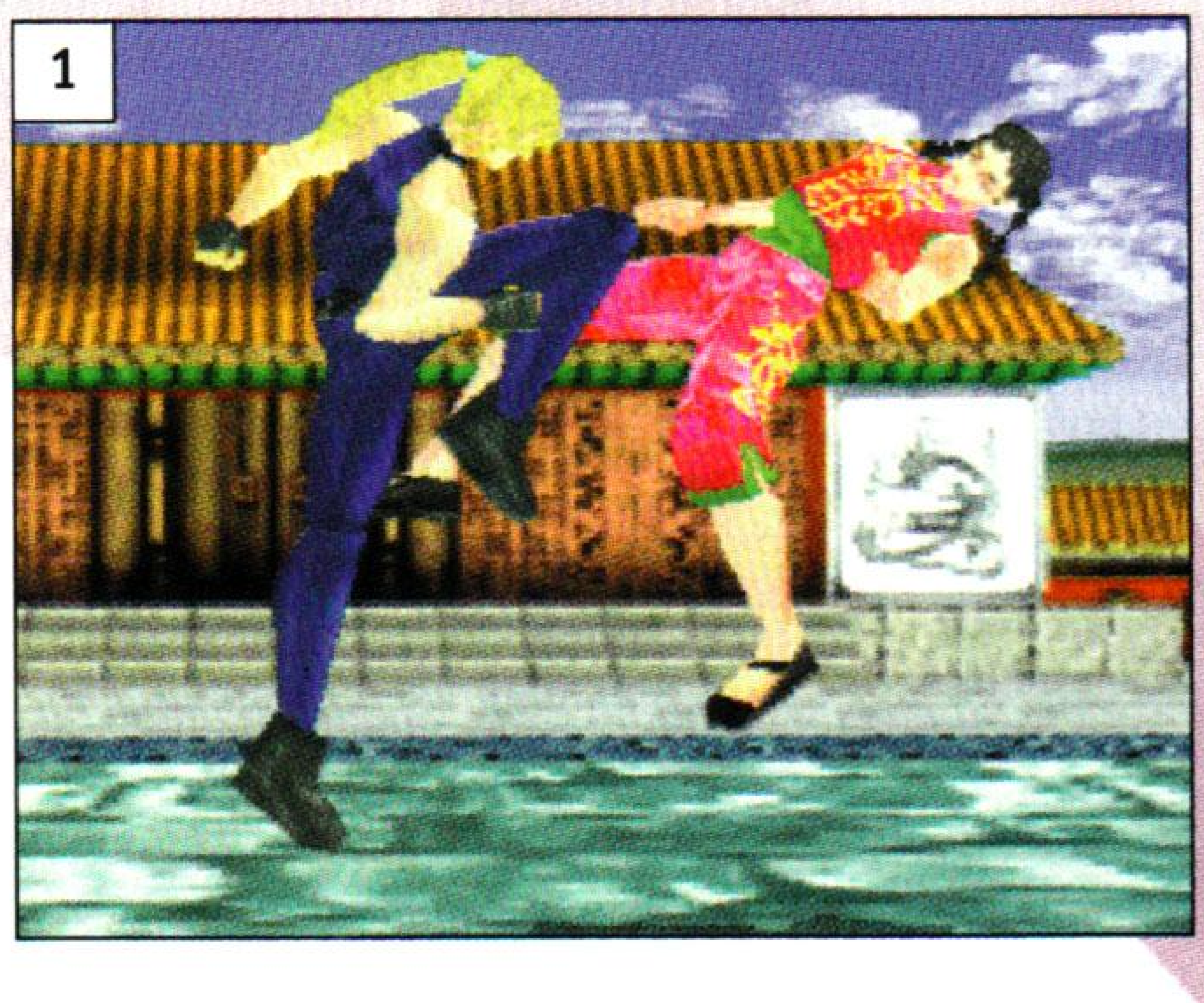
Countering effectively also boosts your opportunities with floating combinations. The added force of your floating attack sends them even higher into the air than usual, giving you the opportunity to score more hits. If ever you want to see Lau’s Pai-specific 13-hit combo, you’re going to need to learn to counter properly.

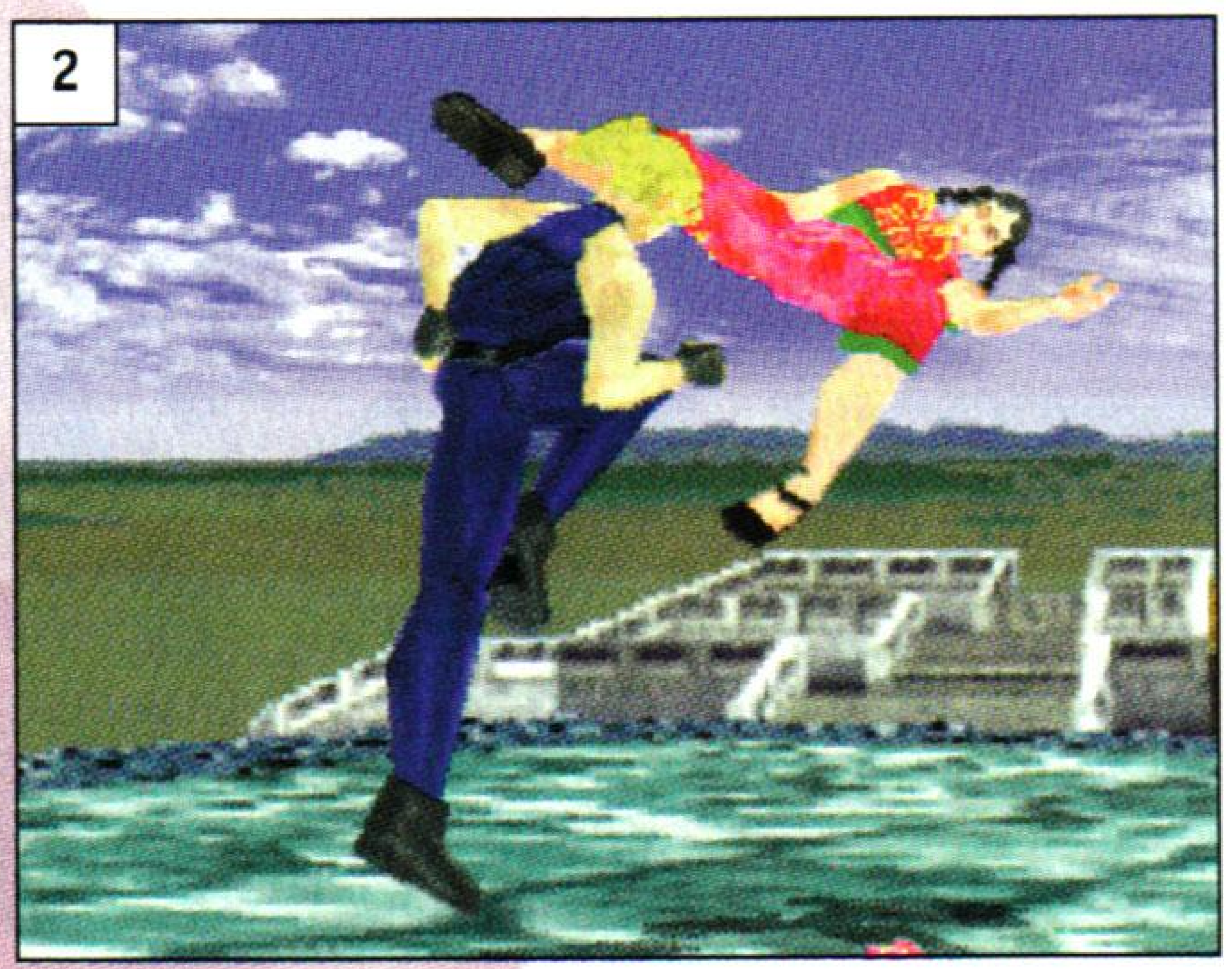
Below, it’s father against daughter in this particular battle as Lau and Pai duke it out. Pai comes in with a triple punch into high roundhouse, but Lau ducks the clumsy kick and responds with his own low roundhouse as Pai’s foot flies ineffectively over his head. Lau’s hit here scores extra damage and will keep Pai on the ground longer, boosting his chances of a successful pounce.



These two pictures below dramatically show the extra floating combination potential inherent when countering has been successfully mastered. Poor old Pai’s roundhouse takes far too long to hit, giving Sarah huge amounts of time within which to counter with a knee. This already formidable floating hit is even more devastating when used as a counter and sends the light Pai right up into the air. The picture on the left isn’t a counter and shows how a basic knee produces a float that’s nowhere near as high.

ENGAGE COUNTER-STRIKES FOR SUPERIOR DAMAGE AND BETTER COMBINATIONS!





AKIRA YUKI

Akira's combinations offer plenty of scope for customisation depending on the individual player and these examples of relatively easy to produce. If you wish to improve on them it's worth taking a look at the move buffering combination piece on the first spread of this Extended Play as Akira combinations tend to start with a stagger, lead into a float and then finish off with either a buffered move attack or a power move. Learning to stagger properly with Akira is paramount - the old side-kick to the crouching defender works well, but Akira's break-stance throws are best used here (B+P+G, D+P+G, F+P+G all produce different variations). Also worth remembering is that the first two movements of the Stun Palm of Doom can effectively be used as more powerful combinations. Try following up with a Dashing Shoulder Charge (B-F-F+P+K).

STUN PALM OF DOOM

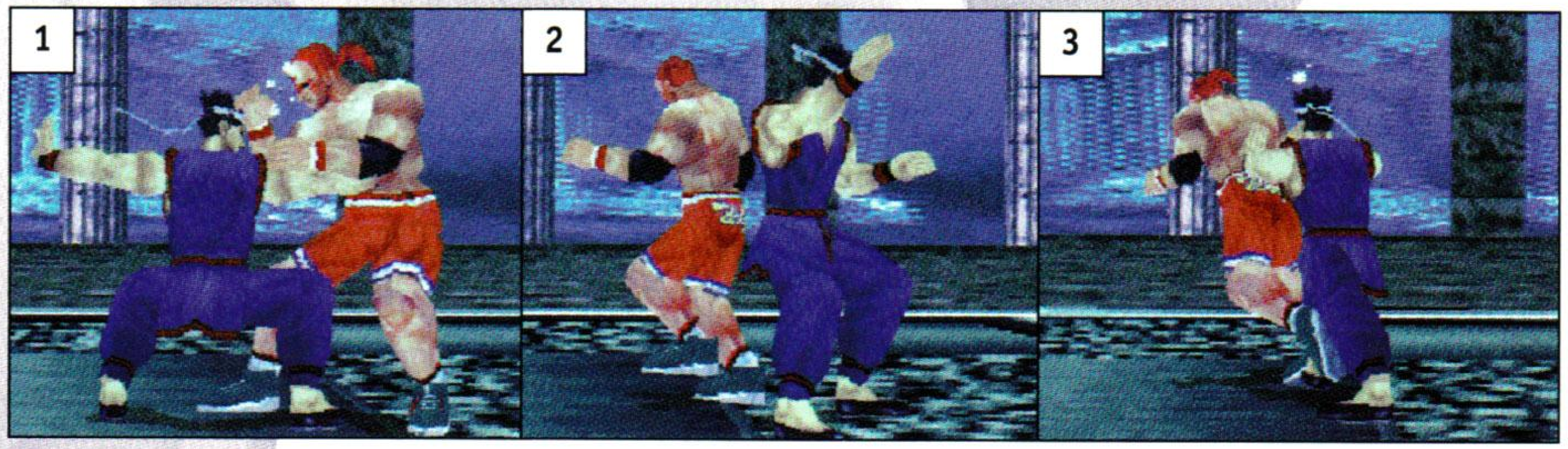
This is by far the most impressive move in the game and it's also the most difficult to pull off effectively when playing Virtua Fighter 2. It just takes a lot of practise, although these techniques may be of some use.

1. Press P+K+G
The infamous Stun Palm itself. No-one should have any trouble at all pulling off this particular move.

2. Press B-DF+P+K
This produces a shorter version of Akira's Reverse Body Check - time the DF+P+K part of the move to strike just after the Stun Palm has connected. The timing on this move is supremely difficult to achieve. It's easier in the arcades.

3. Press B+P
Akira finishes off this devastating move with a reversing double-handed shove to the opponent's back, although for more damage try a Dashing Shoulder Charge (B-F-F+P+K) or other move buffering alternatives.

THE MOST POWERFUL - AND DIFFICULT TO MASTER - FIGHTER! AKIRA YUKI IS THE UNDISPUTED MASTER OF CLOSE-QUARTERS COMBAT!

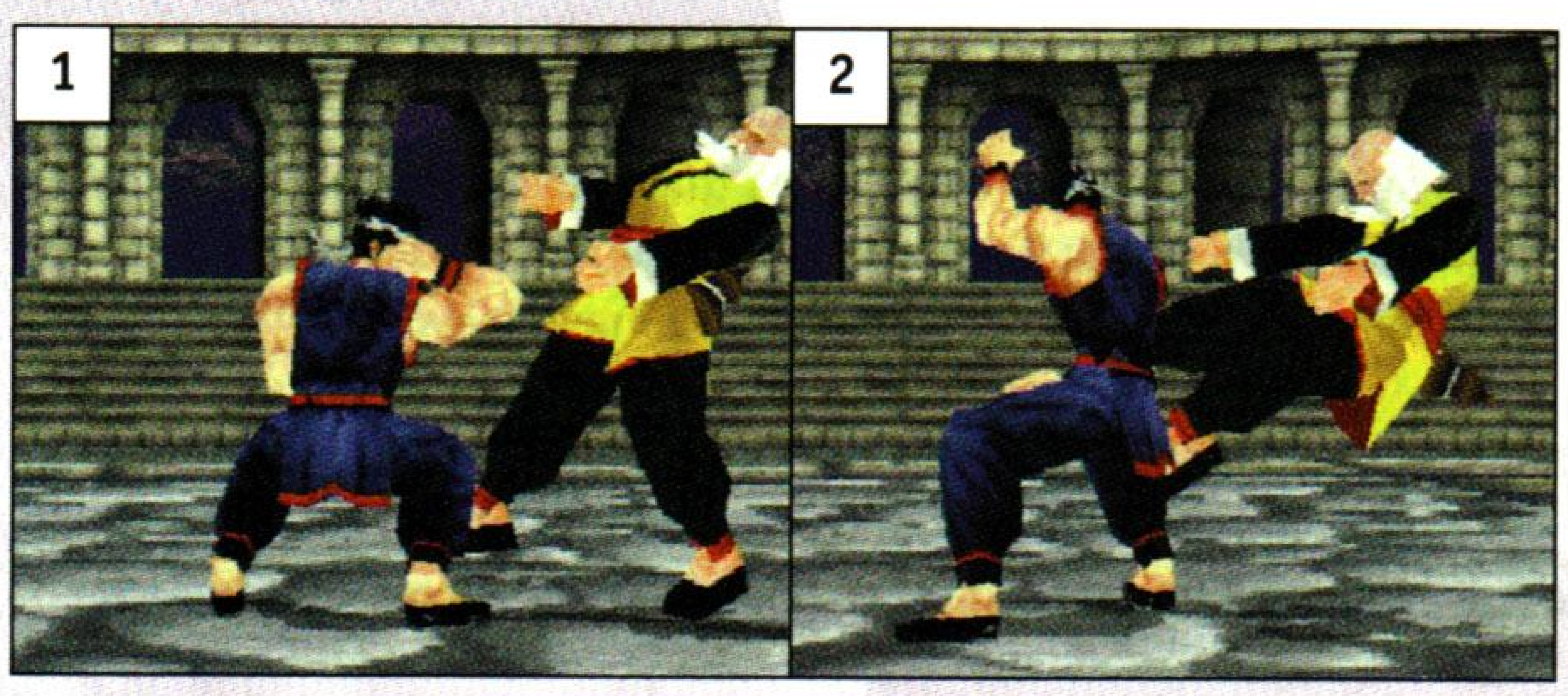


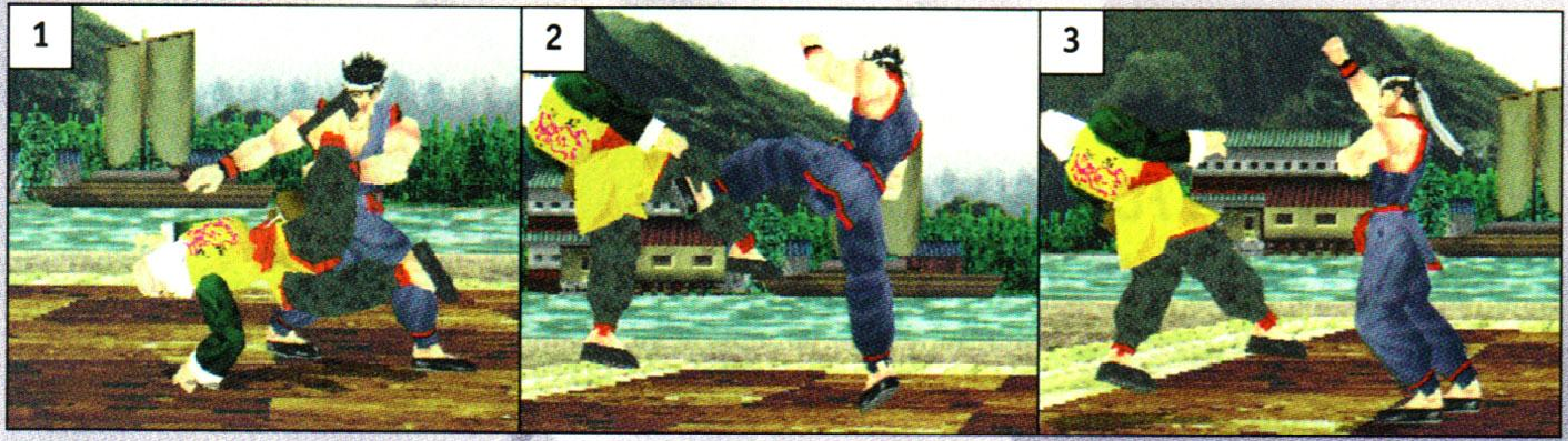
MASTER THE POWERFUL STUN PALM OF DOOM AND ERADICATE ALL OF AKIRA'S HAPLESS FOES!

RECOMMENDED COMBINATION TECHNIQUES

Rising Kick (F-F+K) and of course the knee (K+G, press G quickly again) are all renowned for their floating abilities. Akira's also great at staggering his opponents. The side-kick (DF+K) is good, but the various dashing elbows (F-F+K or F-F-F+K) are even better.

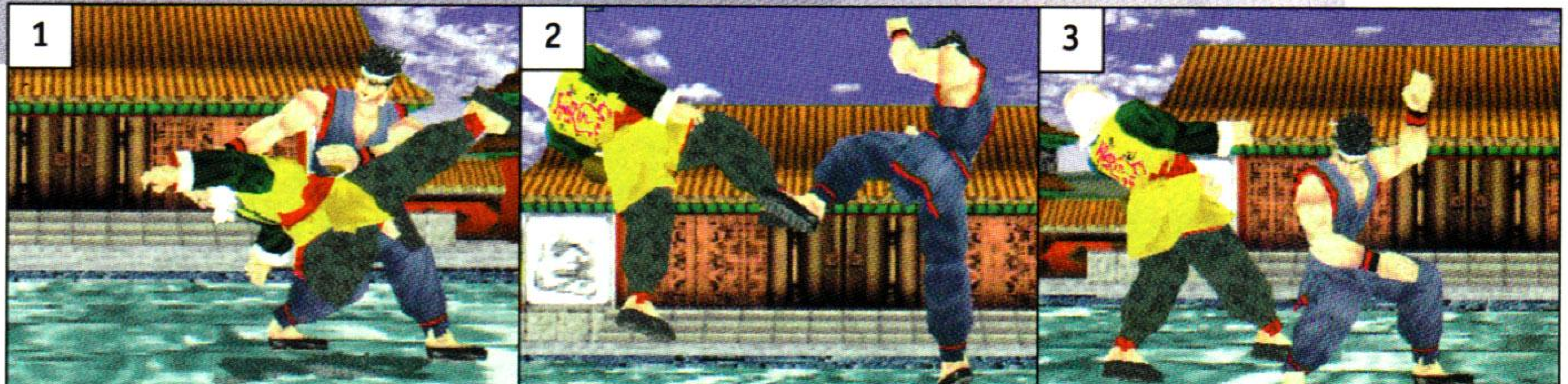
This is a great example of a move-buffered combination strike - the dashing elbow (which slightly floats as a counter move) straight into the dashing body check. It doesn't look possible on paper, but it certainly works a treat.





A celebrated Akira combo that's equal in power to the Stun Palm of Doom. Stagger the opponent (B-D+P+G), follow up with a rising kick (F-F+K) and finish off with a power uppercut (DF-DF+P). A masterful attack that works on heavyweight fighters.

This combo is a derivative of the above attack and shows just how versatile Akira can be - especially when it comes to floating combos. The first two moves (stagger and kick) remain identical, but this time Akira finishes off with a dashing body check.

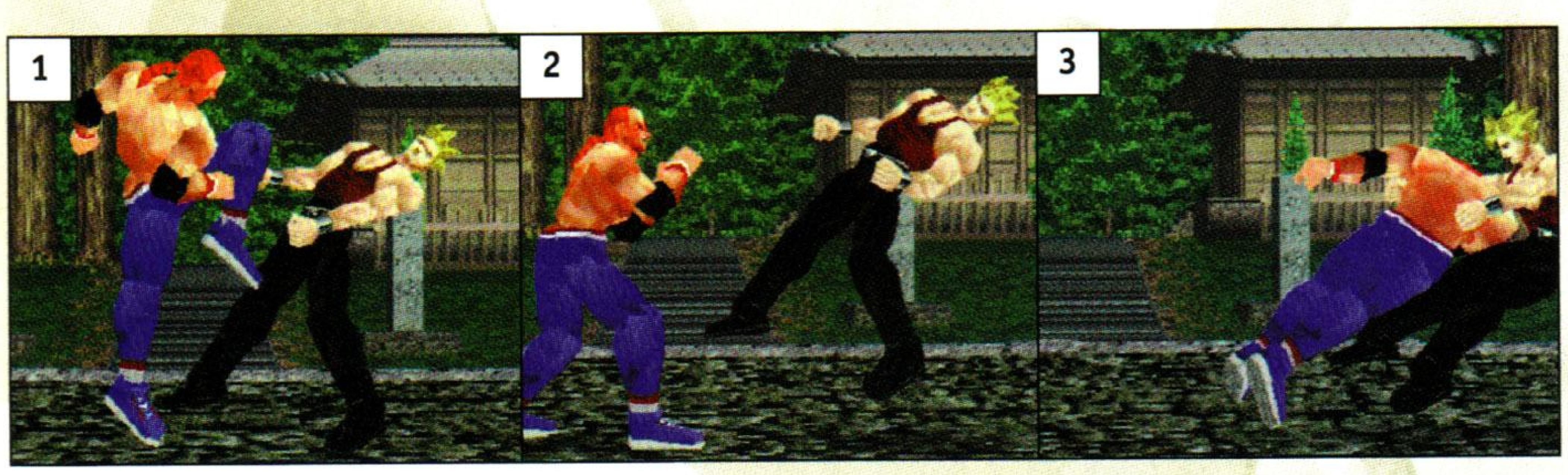


WOLF HAWKFIELD

Surprisingly for someone of his bulk and relative lack of pace, Wolf has a fair amount of combinations at his disposal which help make him far superior to his debut outing in the first Virtua Fighter. What's more, these are quite easy to learn because like Akira, he only has a few key moves that enable him to float an opponent. While we haven't got the space to show everything in Wolf's repertoire, be aware that he has a huge amount of combinations at his disposal. Our recommended techniques should expand your horizons on this score, but couple this combo-ability with his unbeatable range of throws and you have one powerful character.

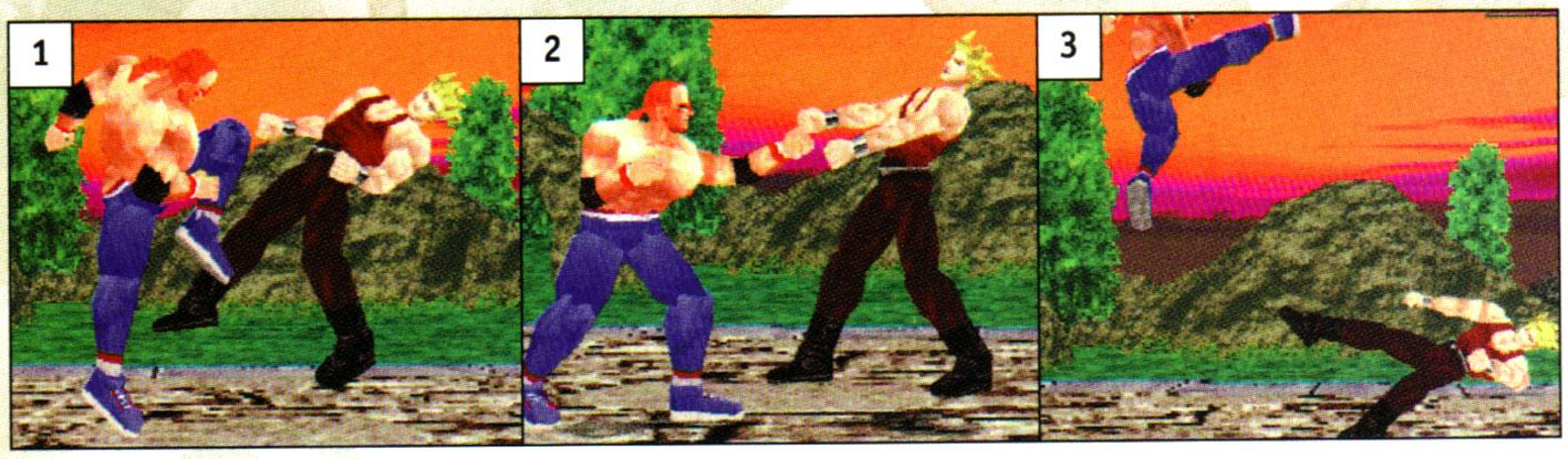
RECOMMENDED COMBINATION TECHNIQUES

The knee (F+K) has a huge amount of power behind it and can send an opponent flying really high. Wolf's scooping punch (DF+P) remains a powerful move and can actually be used mid-combo in order to send your opponent flying a bit higher so you can get more hits in. In actual fact, Wolf has a tremendous amount of variety in his combinations, even though only a few moves can be used to generate the necessary float-ing effect.



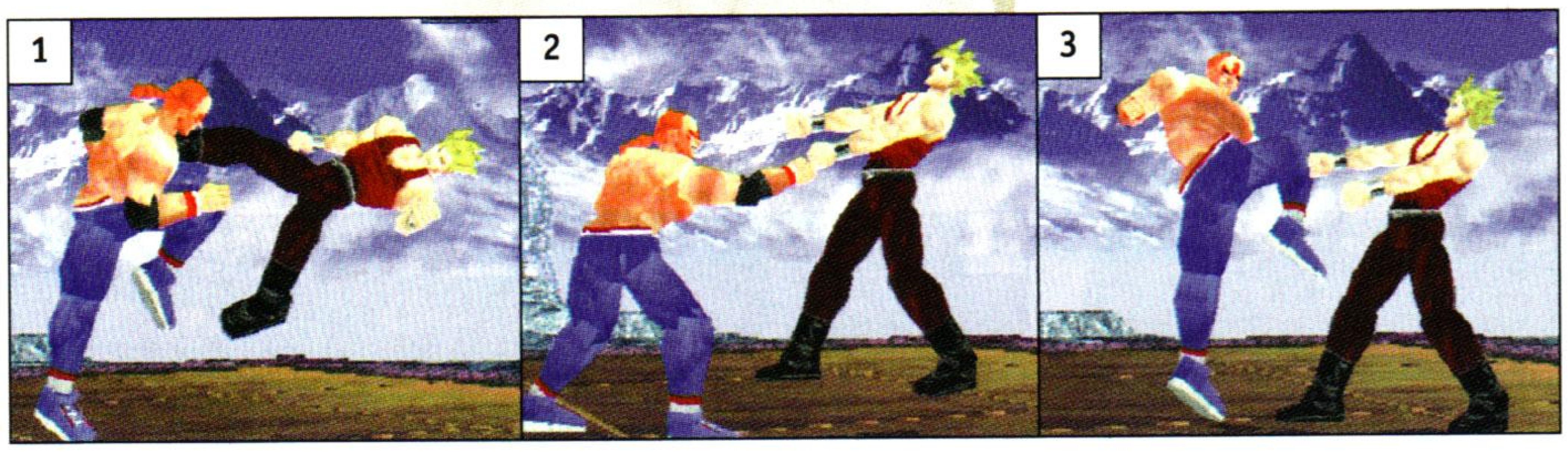
This is a very easy to learn Wolf combo that doesn't really look possible, but always works a treat. Counter with a knee (F+K) to float the opponent and punch (P). Follow up immediately with a shoulder charge (B-F+P). Superlative.

THE PRO-WRESTLING ACE HAS A HUGE ARRAY OF MULTI-HIT STRIKES AS WELL AS SUPER-POWERFUL THROWING TECHNIQUES!



A slightly more difficult combo (above). Counter with a knee (F+K) and immediately punch. As soon as it hits, retract the punch with the G button and finally finish off the combo with a flying kick (U+K).

The combo below again uses the retracted punch. Counter with a knee, follow with the punch in question and you should have plenty of time to finish off the foe with another knee. An intriguing example.



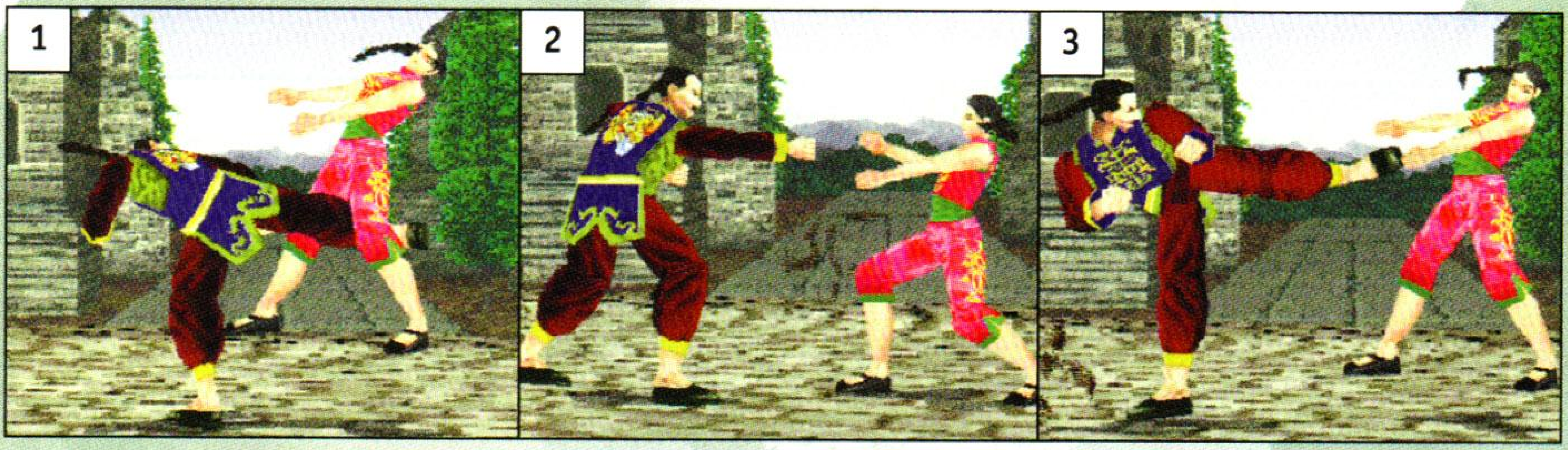
TRUE VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 MASTERS RECOGNISE THE RAW POTENTIAL WOLF HAS AS A POWERFUL FIGHTER!

LAU CHAN

We aren't going to dwell to long on old Lau, because there isn't really a technical art to this particular character - certainly not like Akira, any way. Lau's combinations tend to follow a remarkably similar pattern - he uses a scooping move to float his opponents into the air, whereupon he uses a PPPK combination (or equivalent) to cause the damage. It's not exactly that difficult to learn. Remember though that Lau's floating moves (and he has plenty of them) are far more effective when used to counter an opponent's attack.

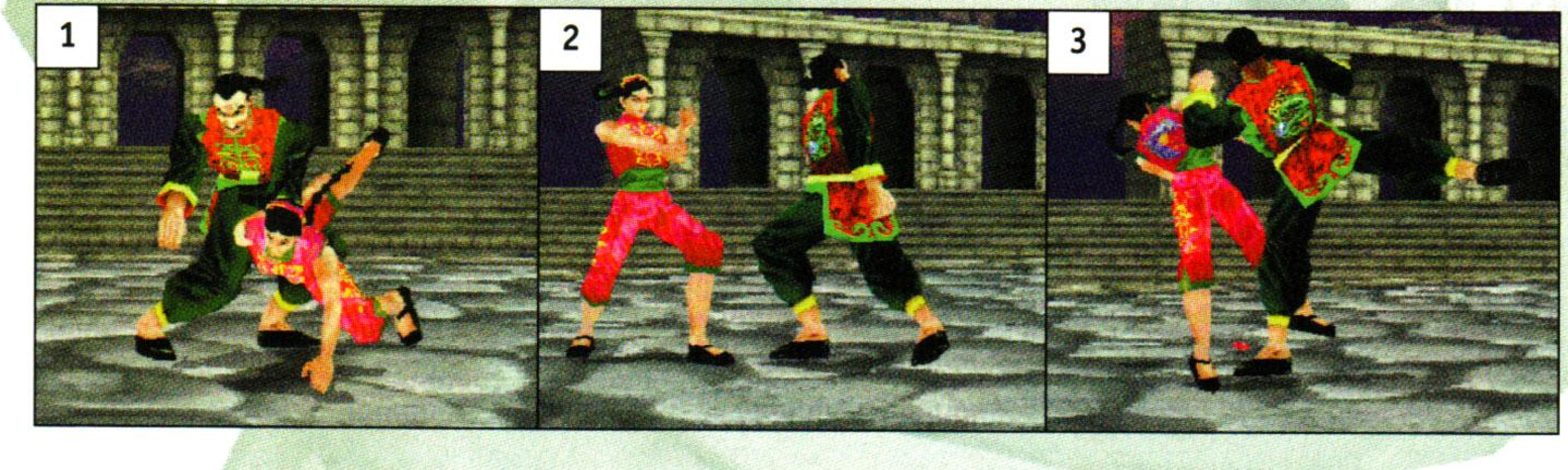
RECOMMENDED COMBINATION TECHNIQUES

Far too many to list here - DF-DF+P, UF+K, F-D+K, UF-K+G and DF+K all have plenty of floating possibilities, although some only give you the height you require when used as a counter. As you can see, there's little surprising on these pages in terms of multi-hit strikes - just hones to goodness hits, and plenty of them. Pai (due to her lightness) suffers badly against Lau when using floating combinations.



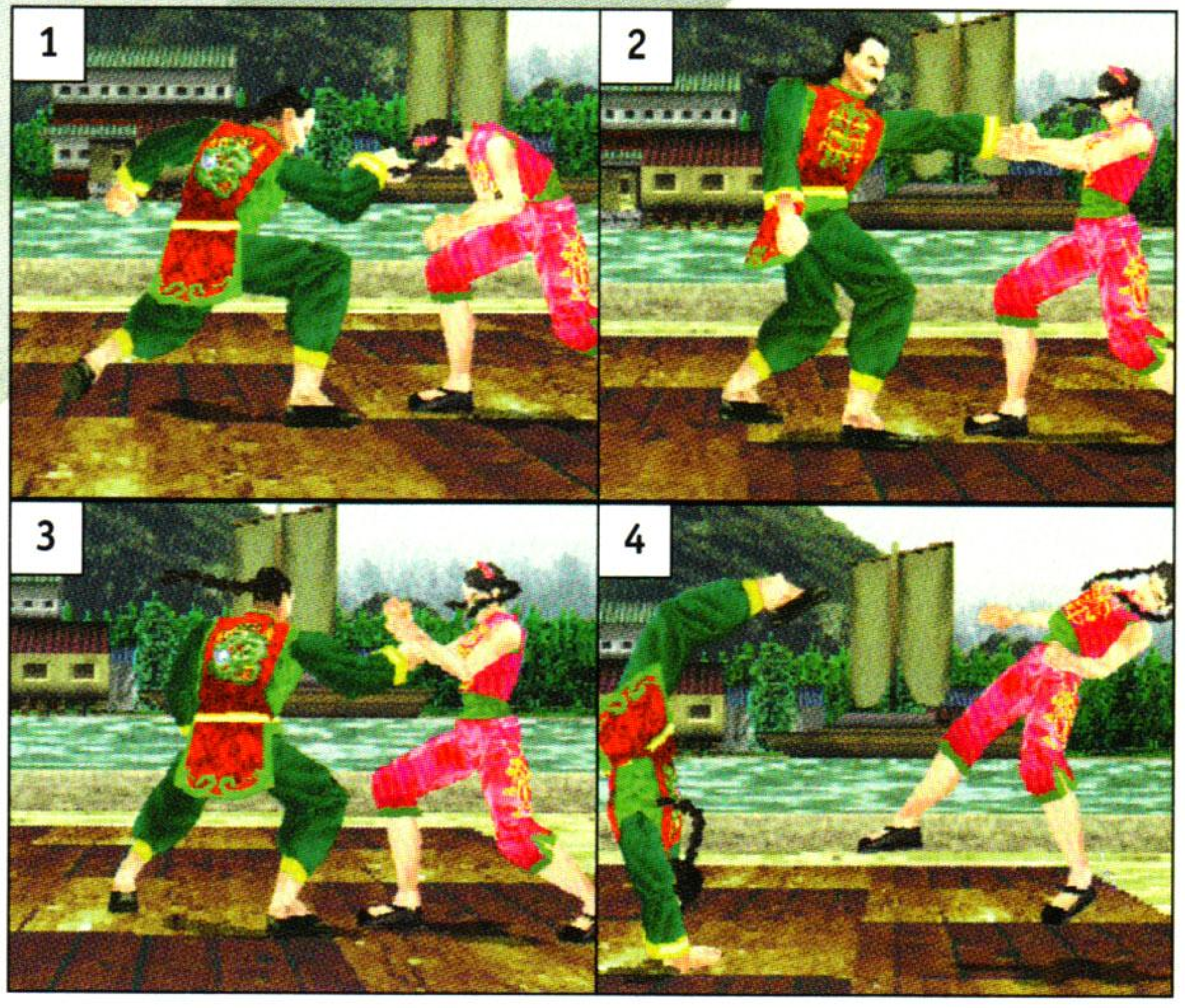
The sequence (left) shows that Lau's basic side-kick (DF+K) has good floating capabilities. Follow up immediately with a PK combination!

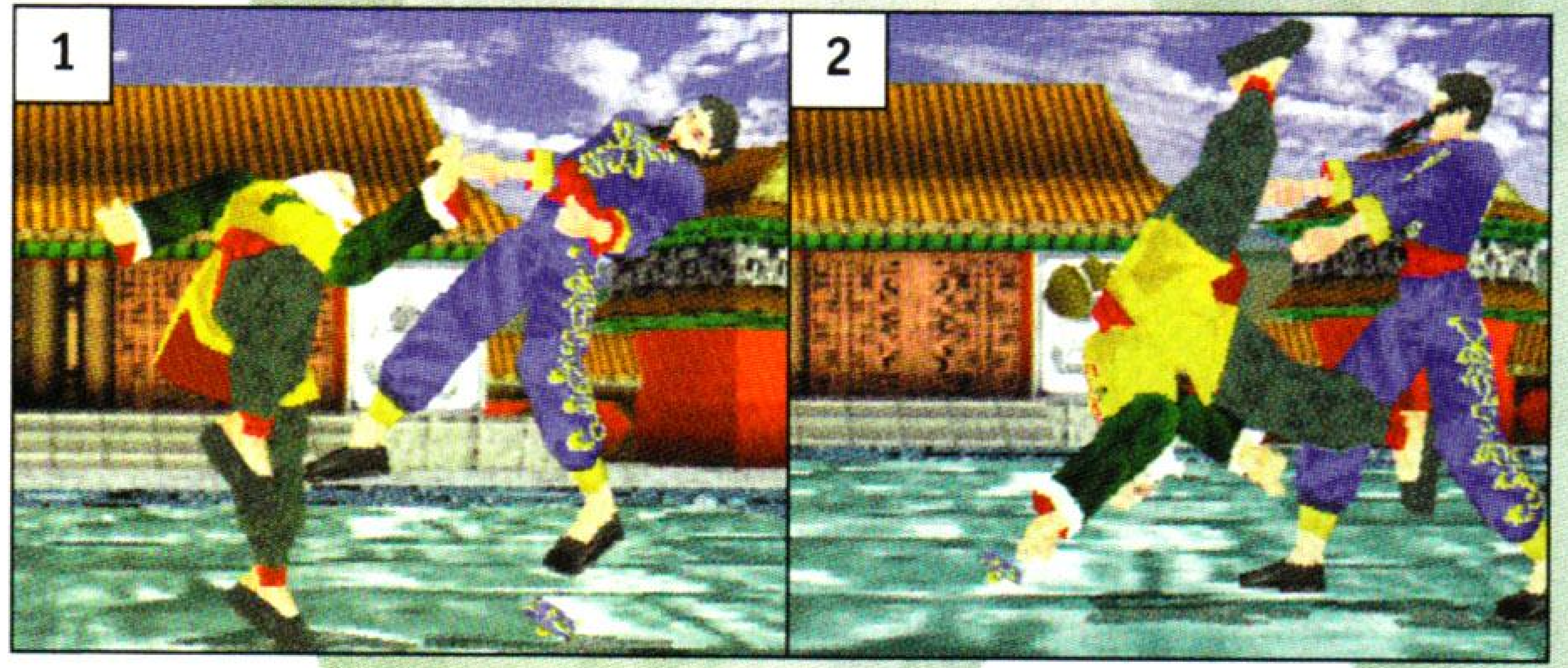
The bottom sequence shows that Lau has lost none of his skills when it comes to using scooping punches to stagger his opponents. Follow up with a PPPK derivative combo. If the initial punch counters, it acts as a floating move. Either way you just can't lose with Lau's combination skills. An adept combatant.



A simple combo to master here. Press B-D+P+G to throw Lau's opponent to the floor and immediately follow up with a basic PPPK combination. The first two punches miss, but the third, plus the powerful roundhouse connect perfectly. Easy.

THE SUPER-FAST COMBO MASTER HAS ENHANCED HIS TECHNIQUES FOR VIRTUA FIGHTER 2!





A simple two-hit combination, but really quite powerful. The uppercut punch (D-DF-F+P) is used to float the opponent. A cartwheel (F-F+K) immediately follows. A good strike.

SHUN DI

This drunken old man prefers to strike unpredictably and to this end he has one of the largest basic moves lists in the game. Also, he's extremely difficult to anticipate, as those moves in question tend to vary height drastically within any given instant. As such, it appears that Shun is a tad bereft in the combination department, with very little in the way of floating attacks. That's not to say that he's a complete washout though, and we do have some techniques which Shun players might like to adopt...

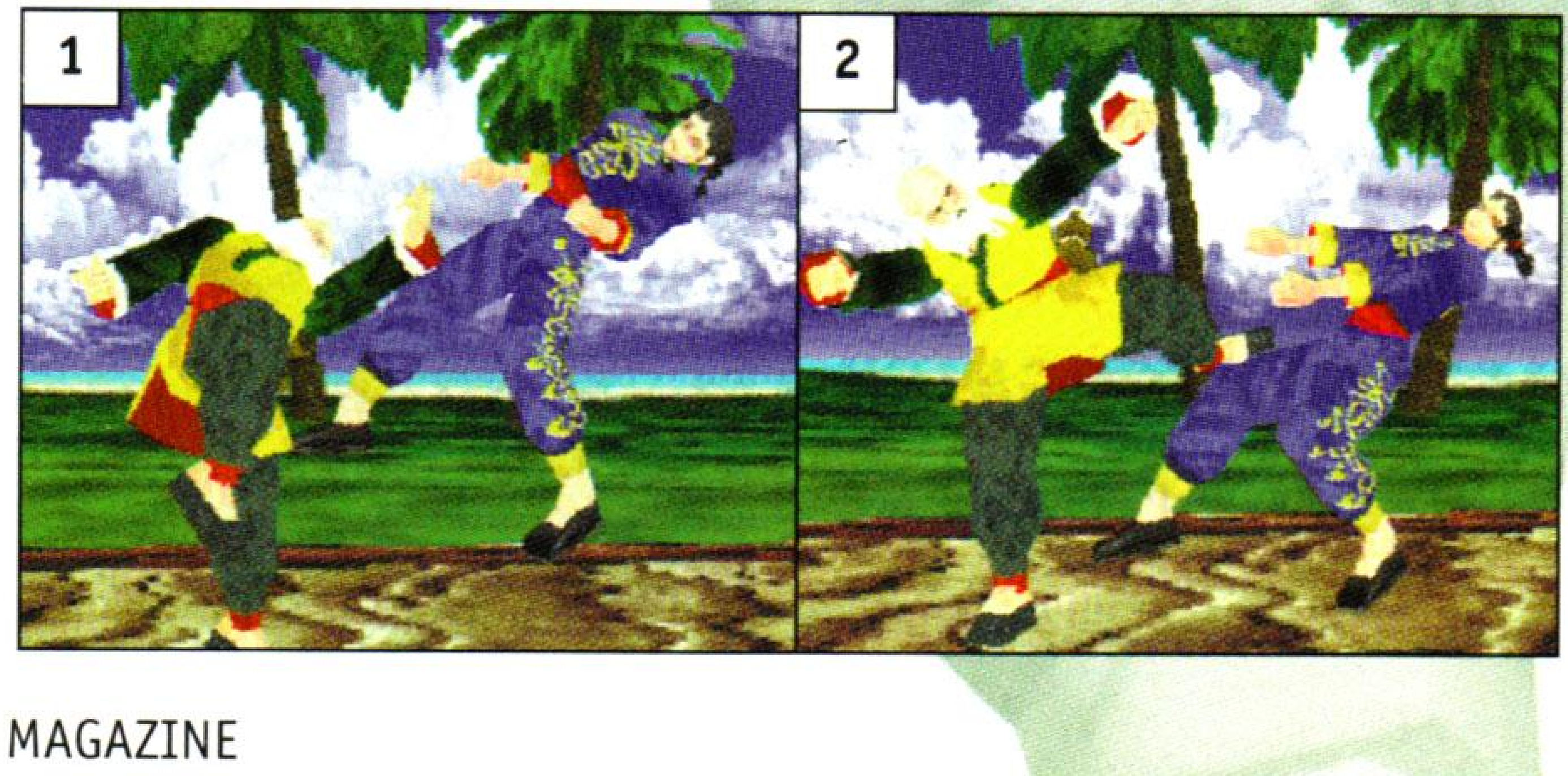
RECOMMENDED COMBINATION TECHNIQUES

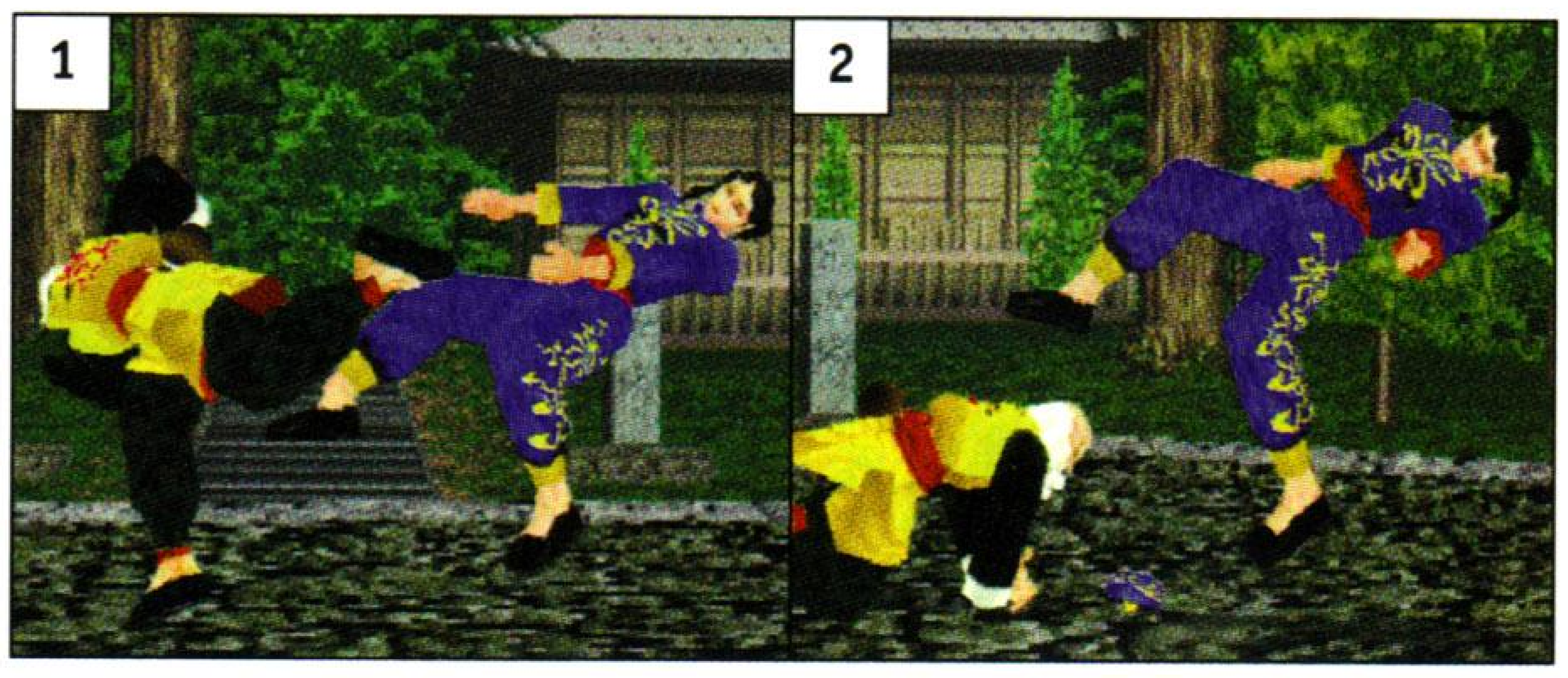
By far the greatest floating technique Shun has is his swiping uppercut, performed like a Street Fighter fireball (D-DF-F+P). This sends opponents flying so high, Shun can follow-up with virtually any move he wants (so go for the most powerful). Oddly enough, his standing basic kick also floats when hitting as a counter-attack. The back punch (B+P) also has some potential.

The combinations on these pages may seem a little on the thin side, but when added to Shun's basic style of play, you should see a radically improvement.

The combo immediately to the right shows Shun's excellent uppercut in action. Executed like a SF2 fireball (D-DF-F+P), it's an incredible scooping move that's a guaranteed float. Here, Shun's following up with a K+G kick.

The far right sequence shows that Shun's basic kick in itself can lift an opponent if it hits as a counter. The potential is limted, however, and here Shun is following up with a simple DF+K+G lower sweep.





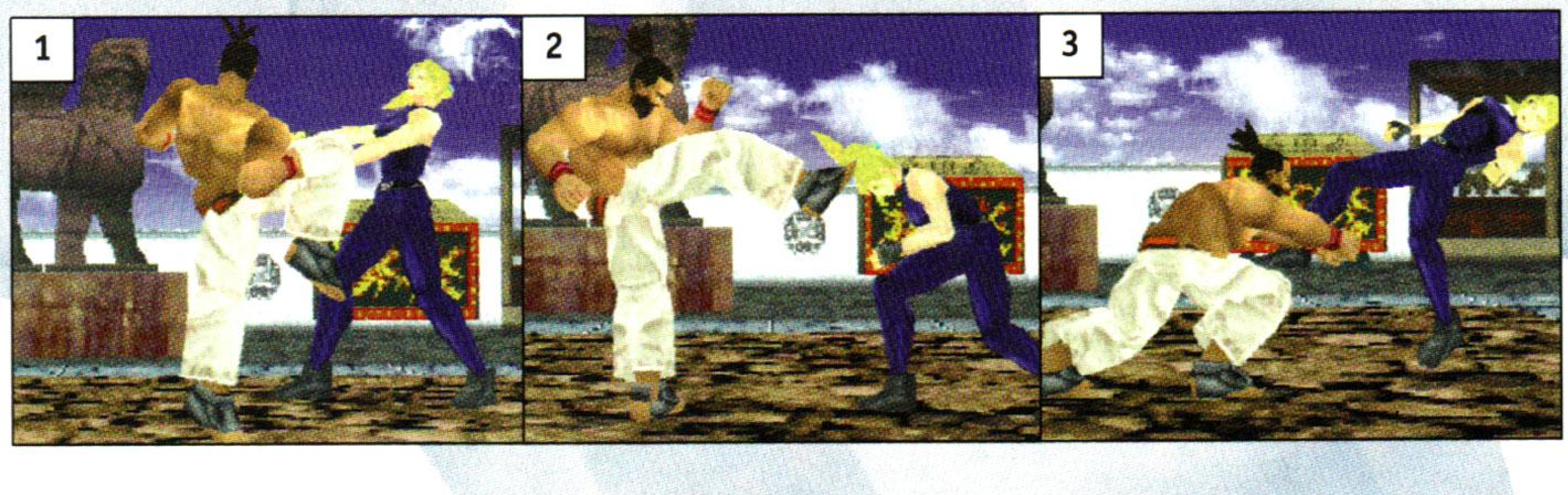
JEFFRY McWILD

The other heavy hitte from Virtua Fighter 1 returns with a greater degree for combination attacks, but unlike Wolf it appears that he has spend far more time progressing his throwing techiques (which are now markedly different to Wolf's - unlike the first game), Still, there is some combination potential available to him, although a lot of his techniques are merely variations on a theme...

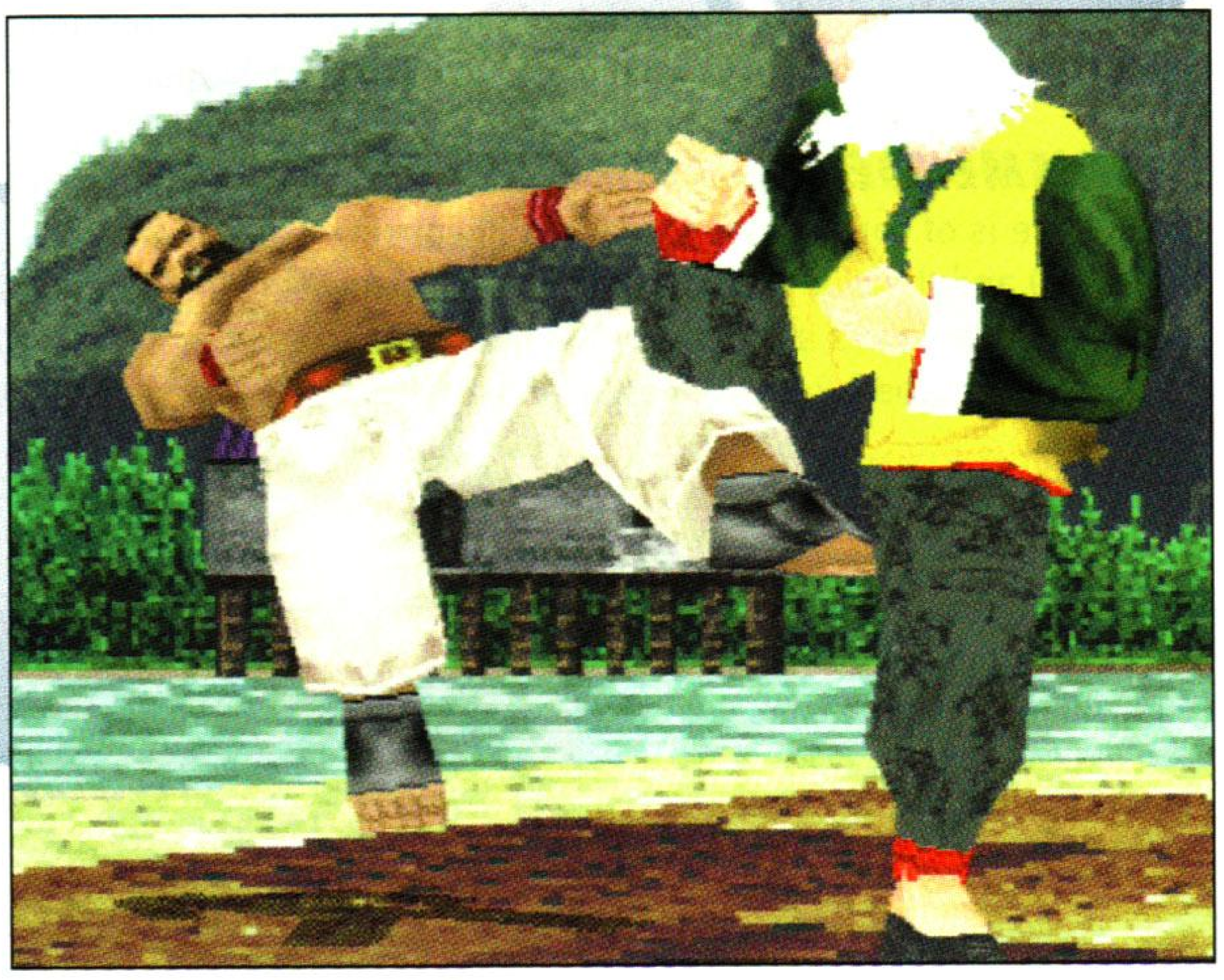
RECOMMENDED COMBINATION TECHNIQUES

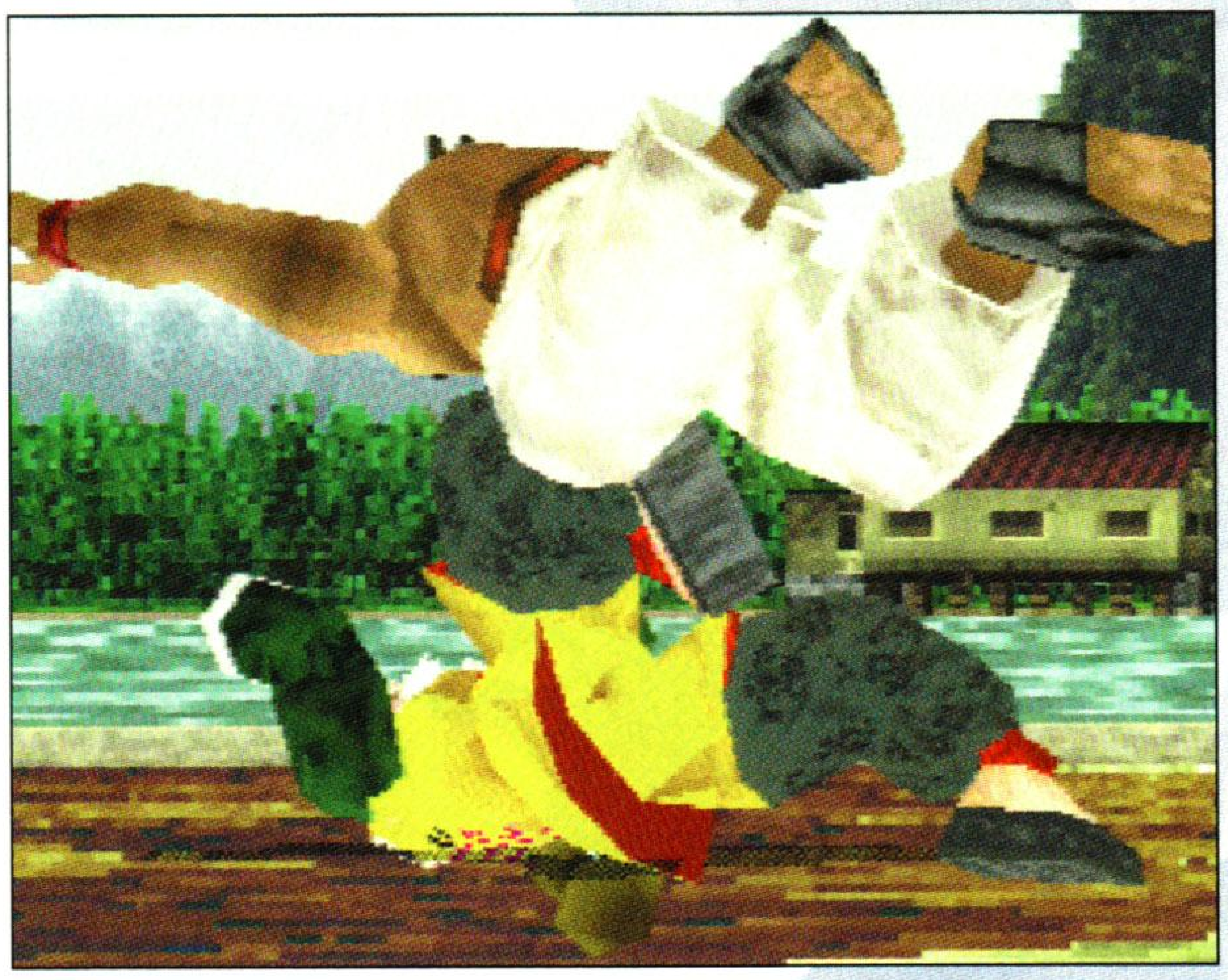
Just like Wolf, Jeffry relies heavily on two major scoring floating hits - the knee (F+K) and the scooping punch (DF+P).

Although there are many different combo permutations evident with Jeffry McWild, there's a distinct pattern being formed - basically, it involves floating with either the punch or the knee and then finishing off with a punch-led combo.

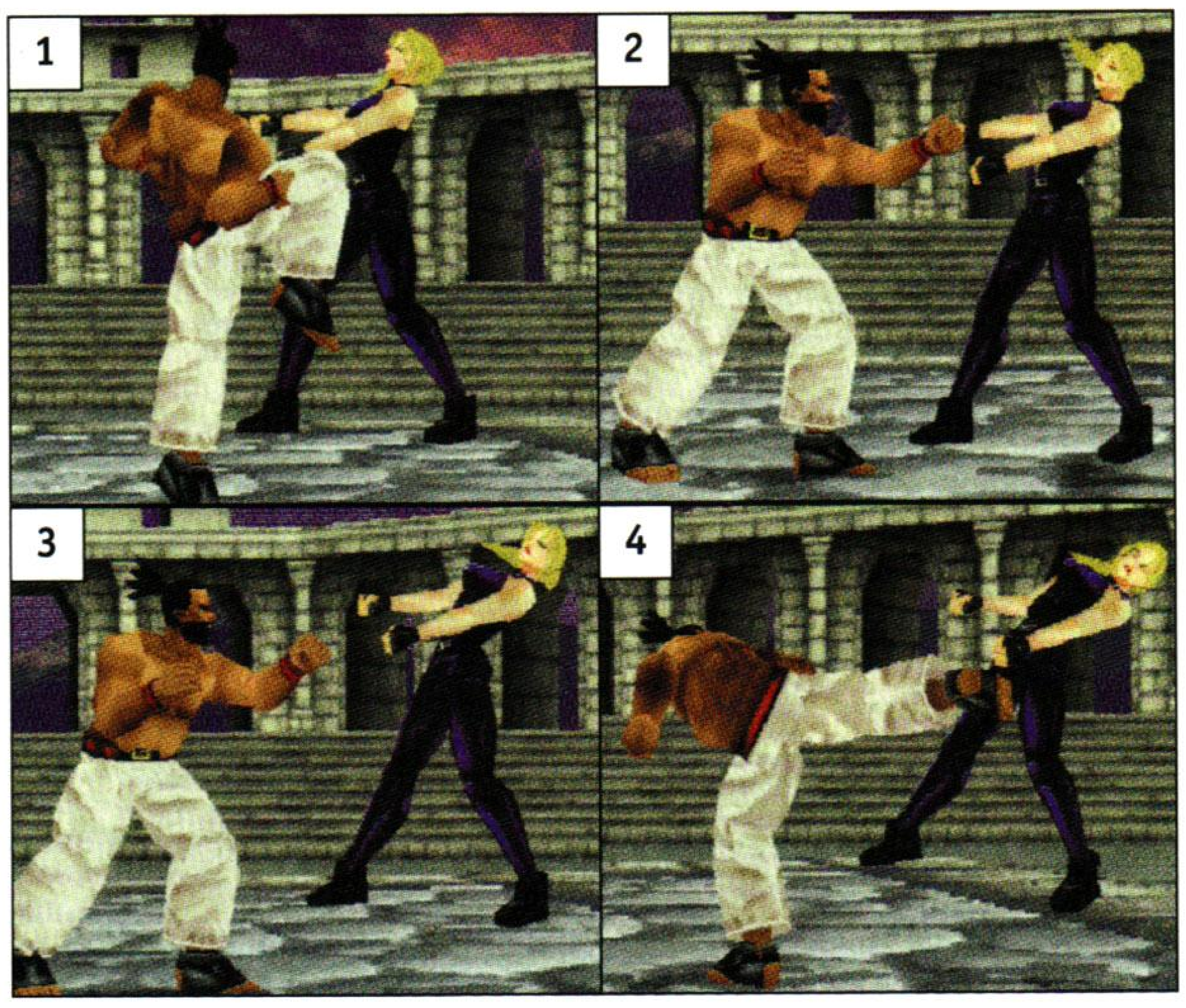


The combo below the nice picture there shows Jeffry executing the knee attack as a counter (F+K) followed by two retracted punches (press G after each P). Finishing off the combo is a simple DF+K side-kick. A pretty decent strike.

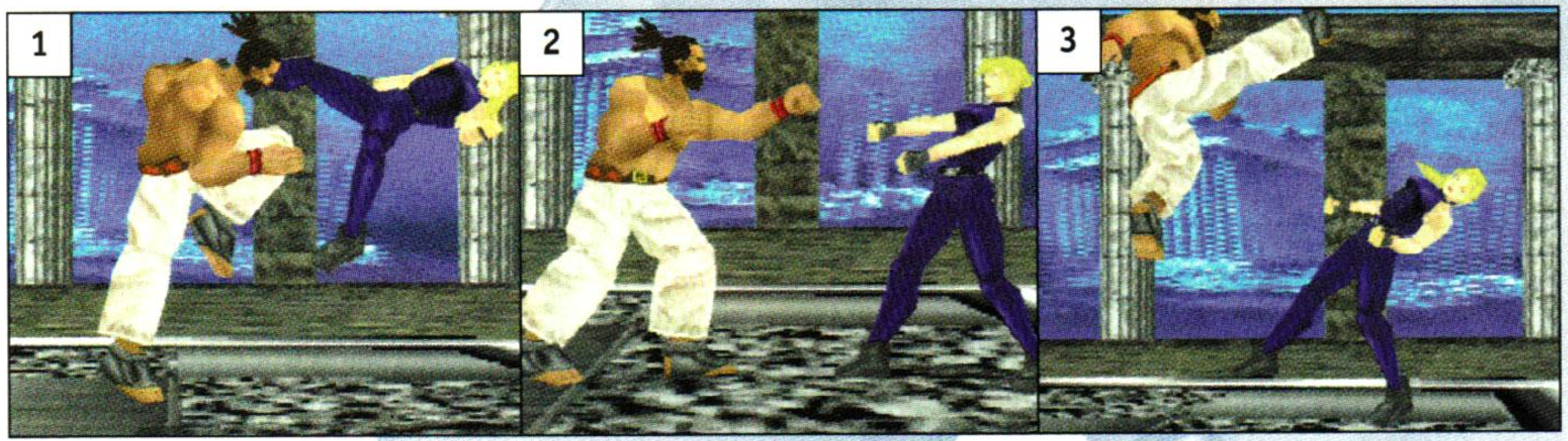




The above combo works well on light opponents such as Sarah (pictured) and Pai (who isn't). Of course, the knee (F+K) floats the opponent when used as a counter. The D+K into F+P double hit should both hit. Much damage indeed.

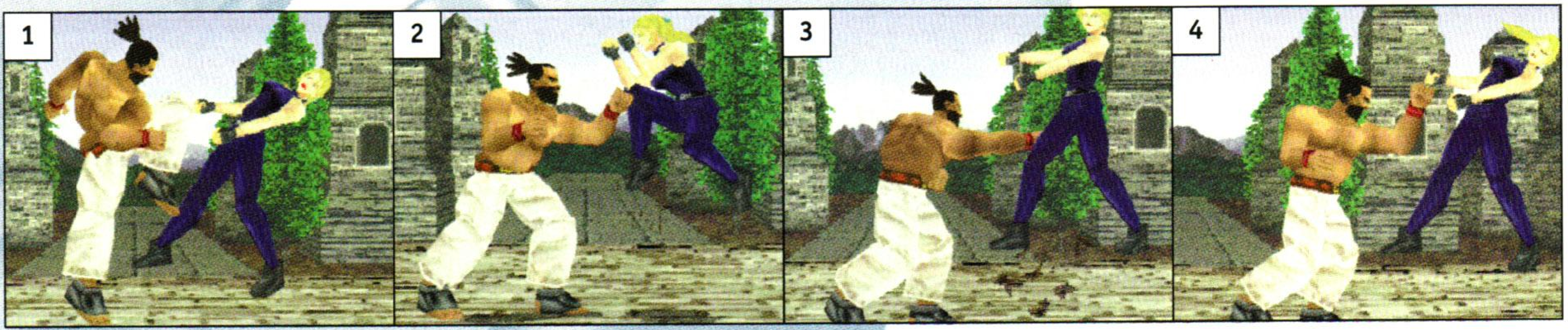


Adept in the ancient Roman art of Pancratium, Jeffry McWild's fighting skills are beyond doubt! He has the most powerful throws in the game!



A combo very similar to one of Wolf's (above). The knee (F+K) is followed by a punch, which is quickly retracted. A flying kick (U+K) finishes off the techniques.

An incredibly simple combo to master to the right. Counter with a knee (F+K) and simply execute PPP.



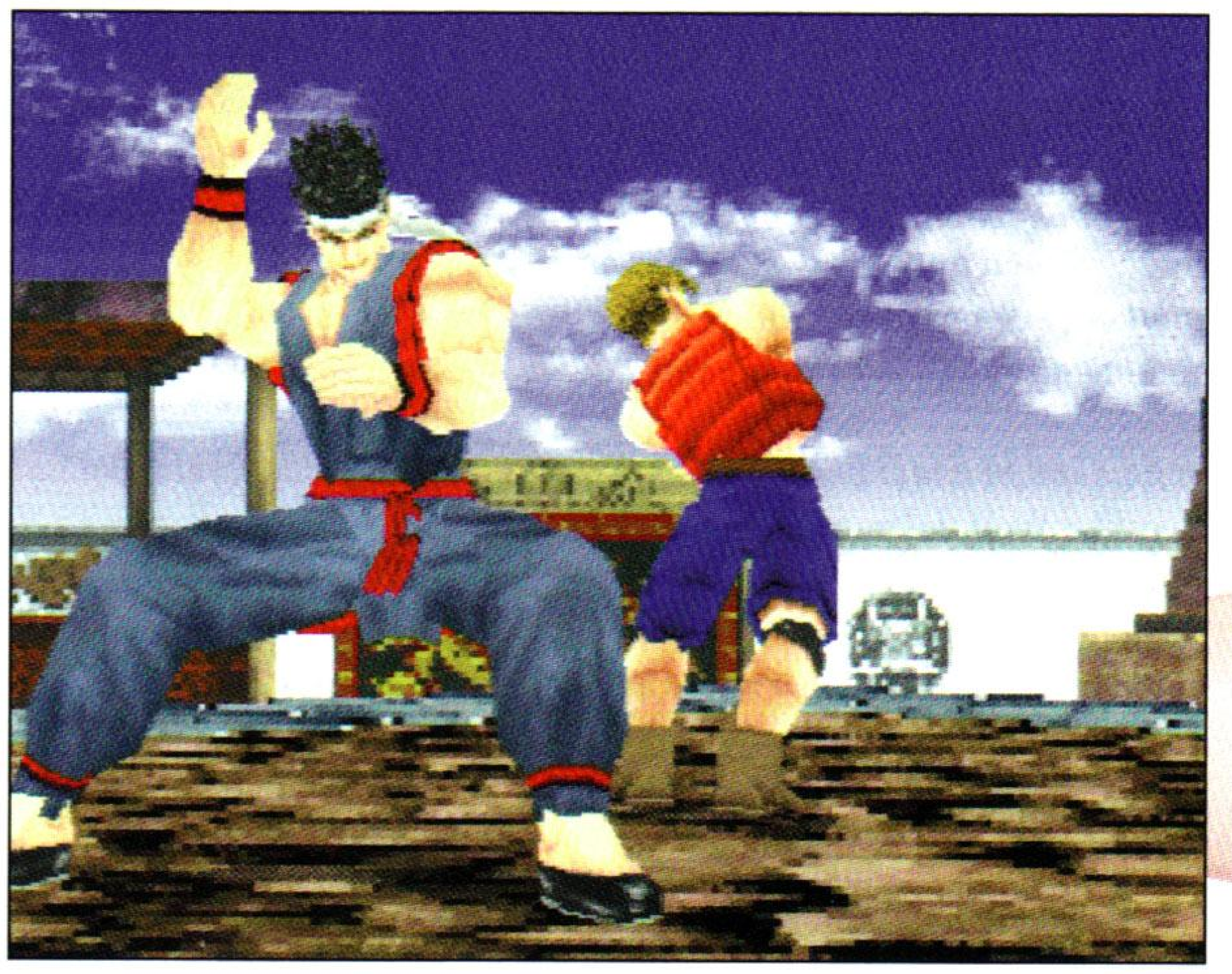
LION RAFALE

The Mantis Fist expert certainly has plenty of damaging basic attacks and moves with a style all of his own. This in itself is enough to guarantee success for many Lion players without even having to resort to combination attacks. This is a bit of a shame considering the wealth of combination potential Lion has at his disposal. What has to be remembered is that although Lion is fast and agile, his attacks lack the kind of power needed to achieve consistent success. That's where the combos come in. Again, compared to other characters', they are weak indeed, but any edge helps.

RECOMMENDED COMBINATION TECHNIQUES

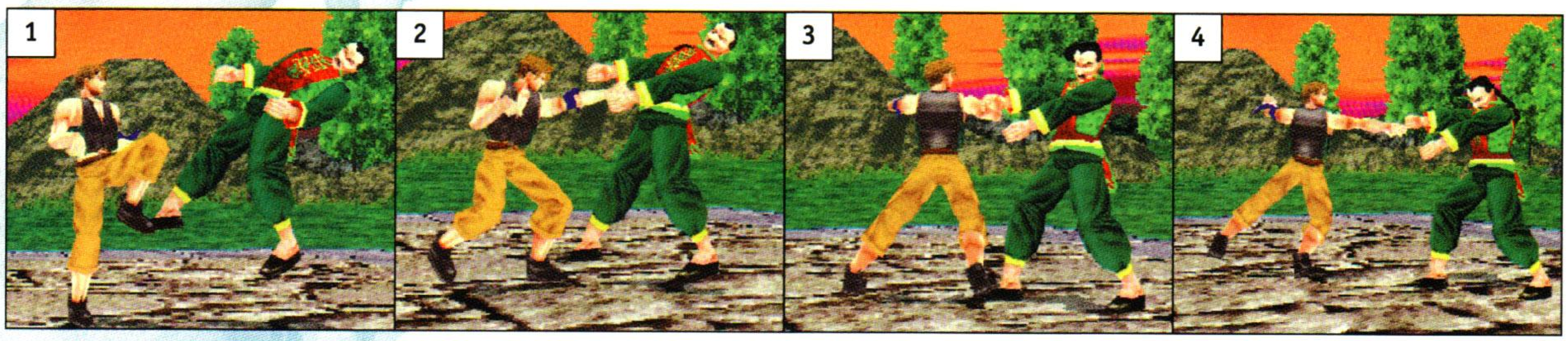
Lion's knee is of course essential (F+K) in starting off combinations, but other moves, such as the small kick (U+K) and the side-kick (DF+K) can be instrumental in bringing down difficult foes.

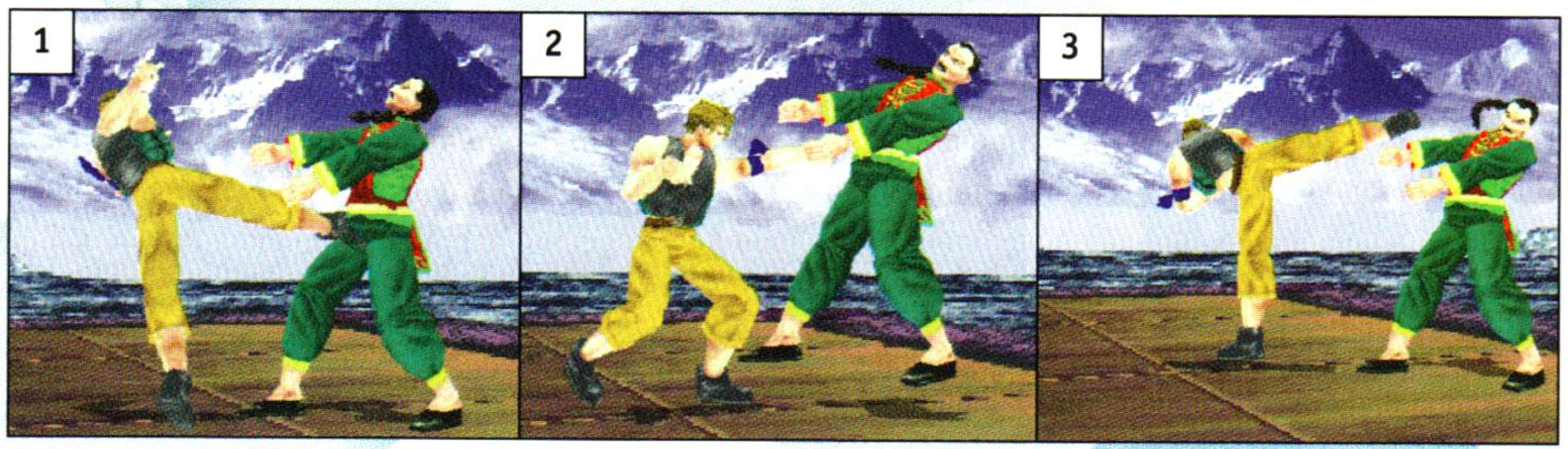
The majority of Lion's attacks are fast and that includes most of his floating and staggering hits - incorporating any of these into your style of play is bound to reap plenty of rewards.



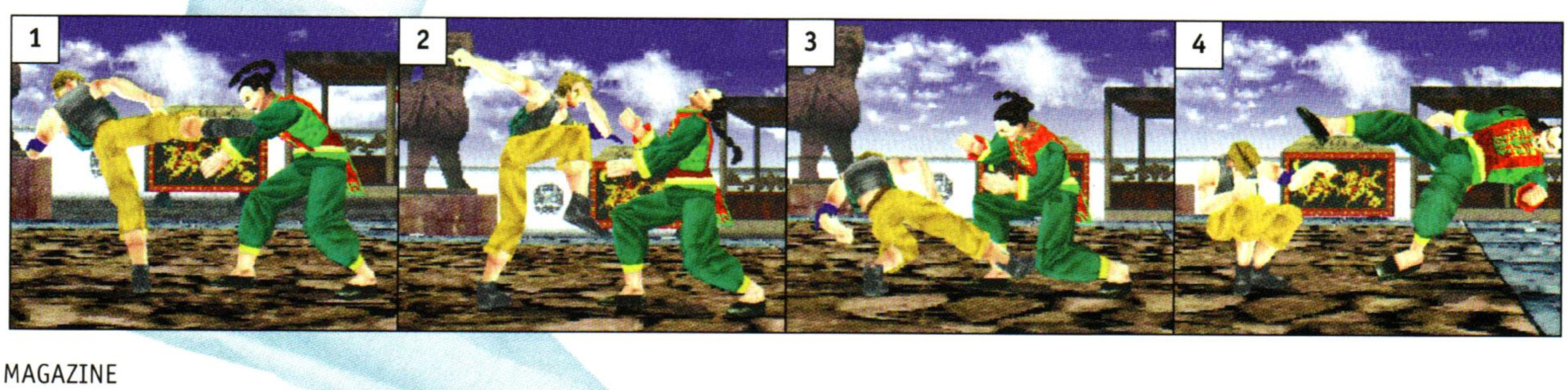
An exceptionally simple combo to master to the right. Use Lion's knee (F+K) as a counter and follow with a simple PPP combo. Just about any one can do this one.

The combination below is quite intriguing in that you think that it can't possibly work. Obviously it does though. Counter an attack with U+K and easily follow it with a PK combo. The first kick has small floating potential and does the job well.





The combo below is interesting. Again the U+K kick is used to begin the combo, followed by DF+P (only once). This has a small float, which allows you to follow up with two low sweeps (D+K+K). Smart.

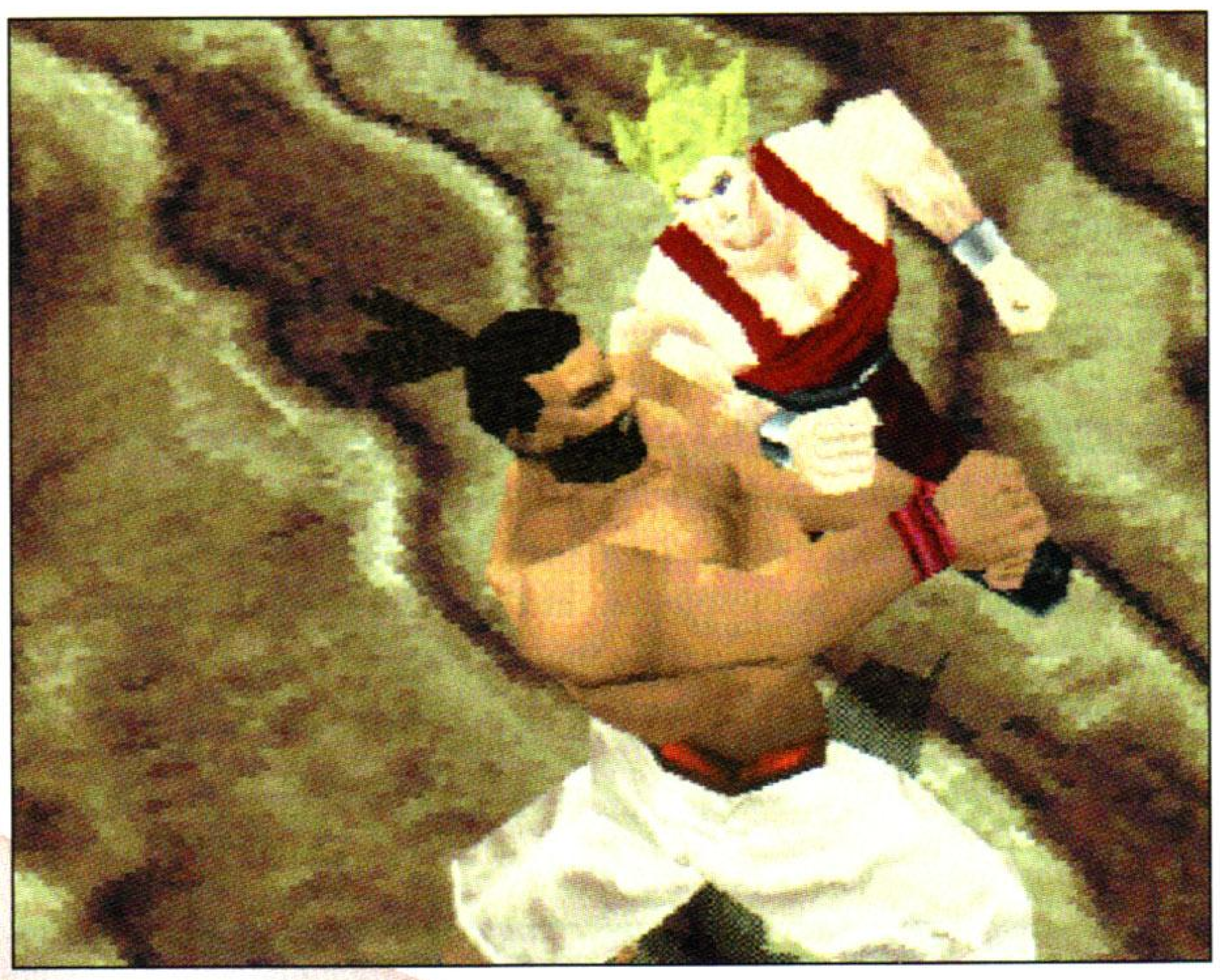


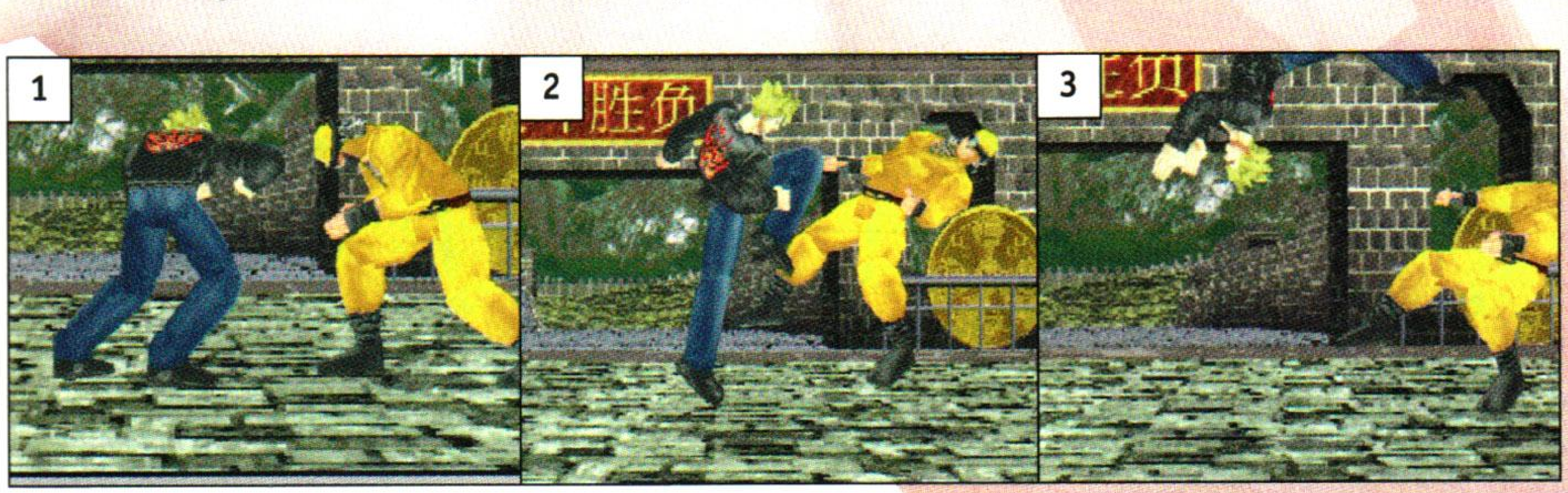
JACKY BRYANT

Big, powerful but fairly limited in the moves department, Jacky has a huge amount of potential in the floating combination stakes and also has a range of moves which can stagger the opponent easily. Moving between the stagger and the float is also remarkably easy with Jacky. He's also blessed with the kick into kickflip combo which is so easy to learn and yet so powerful. Once you know the basic techniques, Jacky is one of the very easiest characters to successfully use in a combination scenario.

RECOMMENDED COMBINATION TECHNIQUES

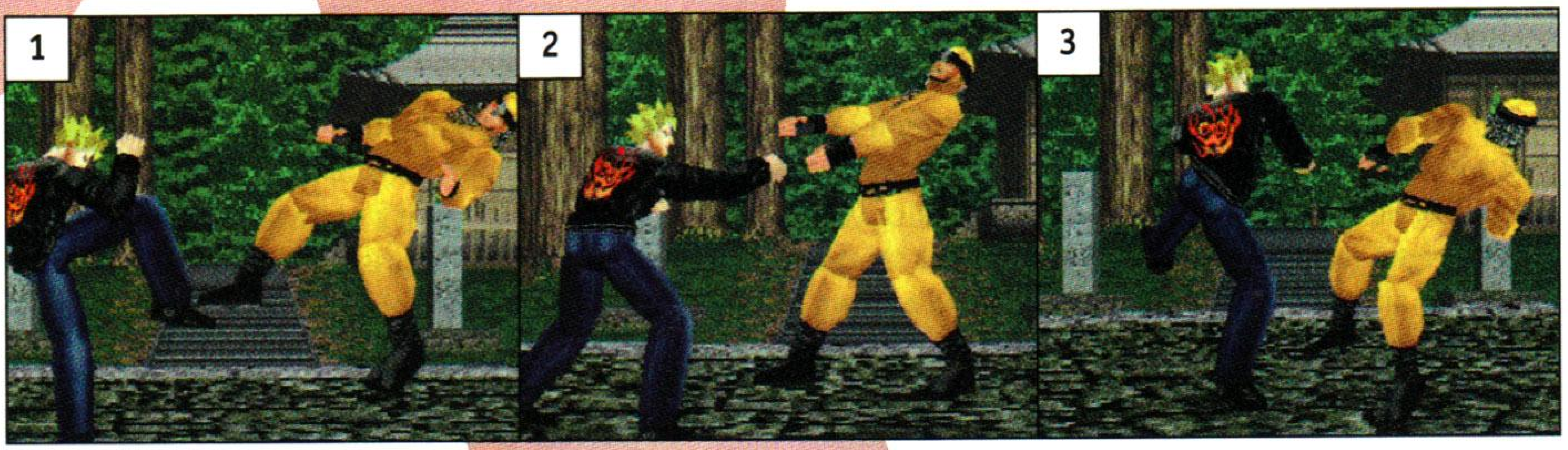
Jacky's most accessible float is of course the knee (it's still F+K), although the toe punt (D+K) also has some uses (see later). Also stick to the basic elbow (F+P) when attempting to stagger your opponent. This move can easily be followed up, as you shall see with our combos. Although they may seem to be quite limited, remember that there is plenty of room to experiment. After that knee strikes home and the opponent is floating, there's tons of potential to try out whatever moves you feel like.

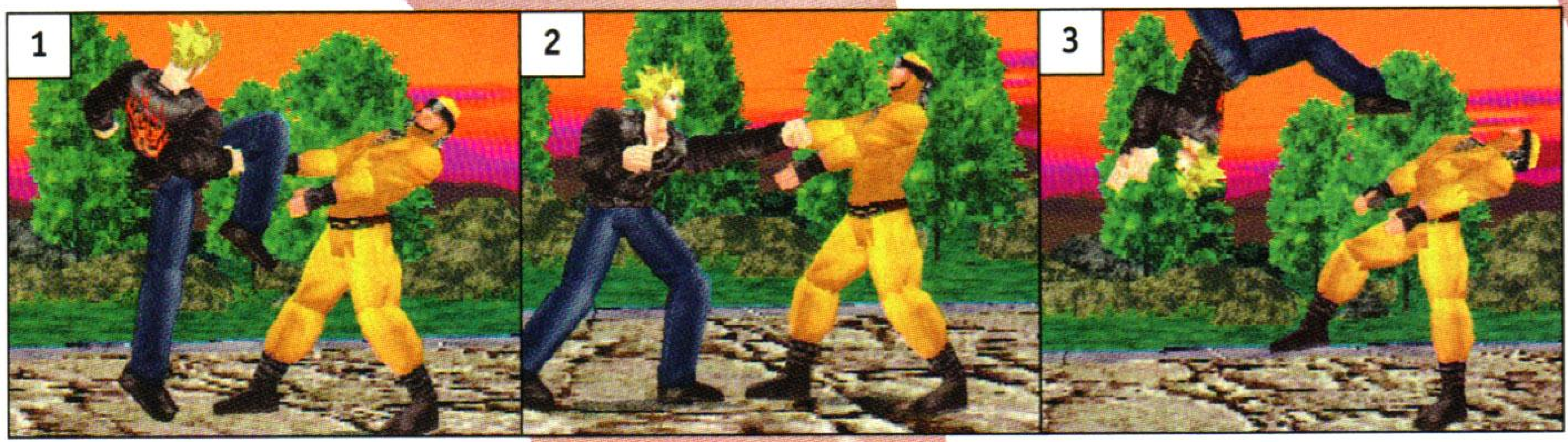




The combo (above left) shows Jacky's stagger into float combination capabilities. The elbow (F+P) produces a stagger, which allows you easy access with a knee (F+K). The ubiquitous kickflip follows (BU+K).

The toe punt strike (D+K) has surprisingly good combo potential. Follow with a PK combo and you should finish up with a pretty powerful roundhouse. An intriguing attack that's pretty damaging all right.





The above combination shows how Jacky occasionally uses retracted punches (which lessen recovery time). Begin with a knee (F+K) and follow up with a punch(then retract it with G) and finish the combo with a kickflip (BU+K).

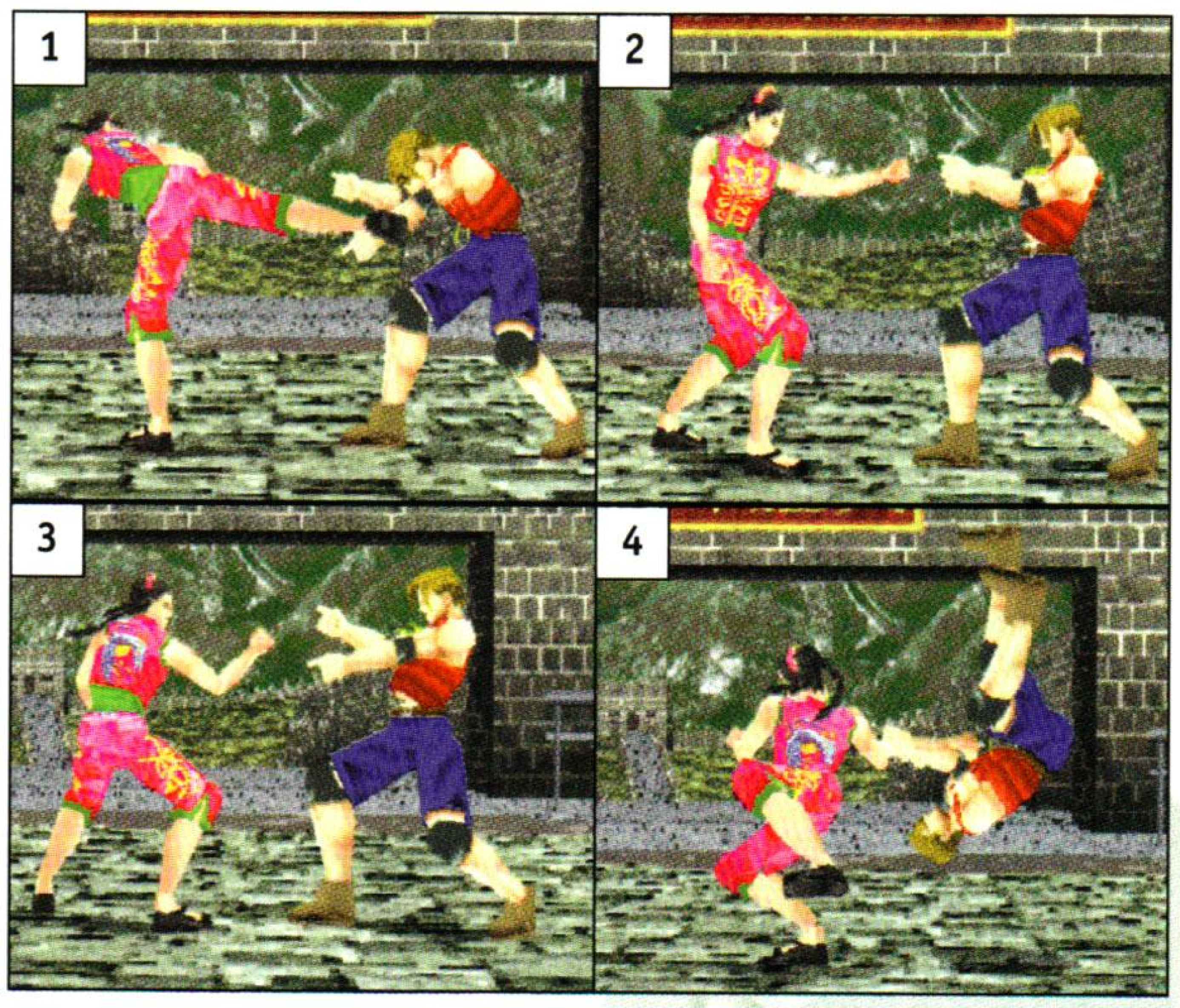
PAI CHAN

Pai isn't exactly the most exciting character in the game, so just like Lau we aren't really going to spend too much time with her, although there are one or two particularly interesting little combinations we've included in later on that may surprise the odd one or two of you.

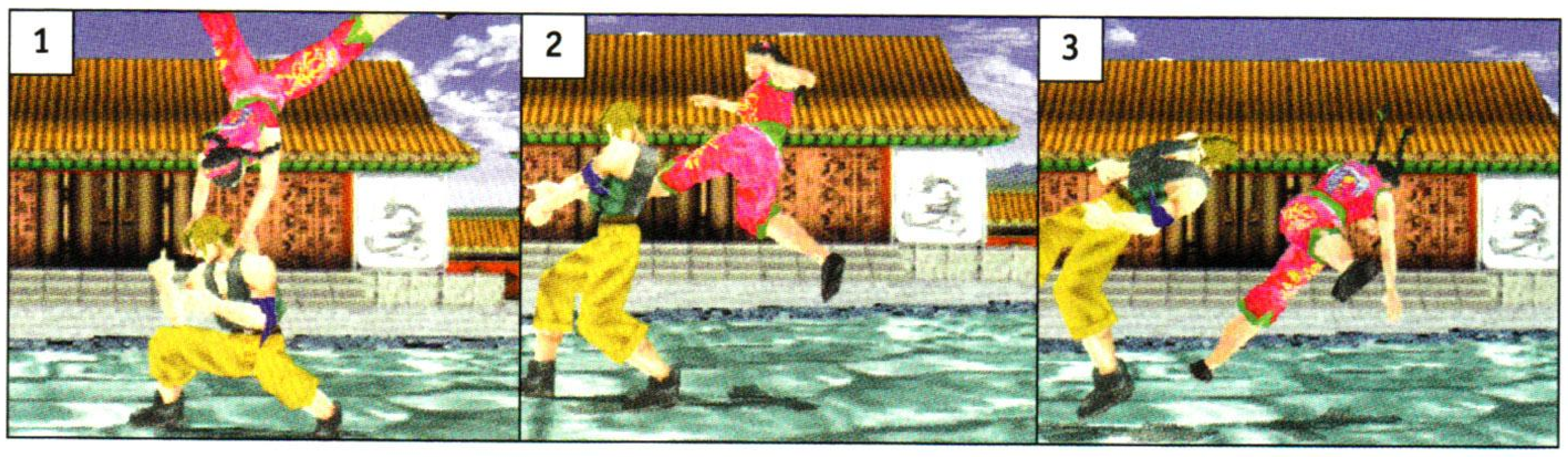
RECOMMENDED COMBINATION TECHNIQUES

A UF+K flying kick does the trick, whilst the ubiquitous DF+K side-kick also reaps many rewards. Pai's very poor at punching with power, so experiment more with her various kicks for the best results.

Pai is actually pretty accomplished in the field of combinations, although it is clear that she lacks the power and pace of Lau. Also, the range of floating moves available to her is limited, which does have an adverse effect on her performance.

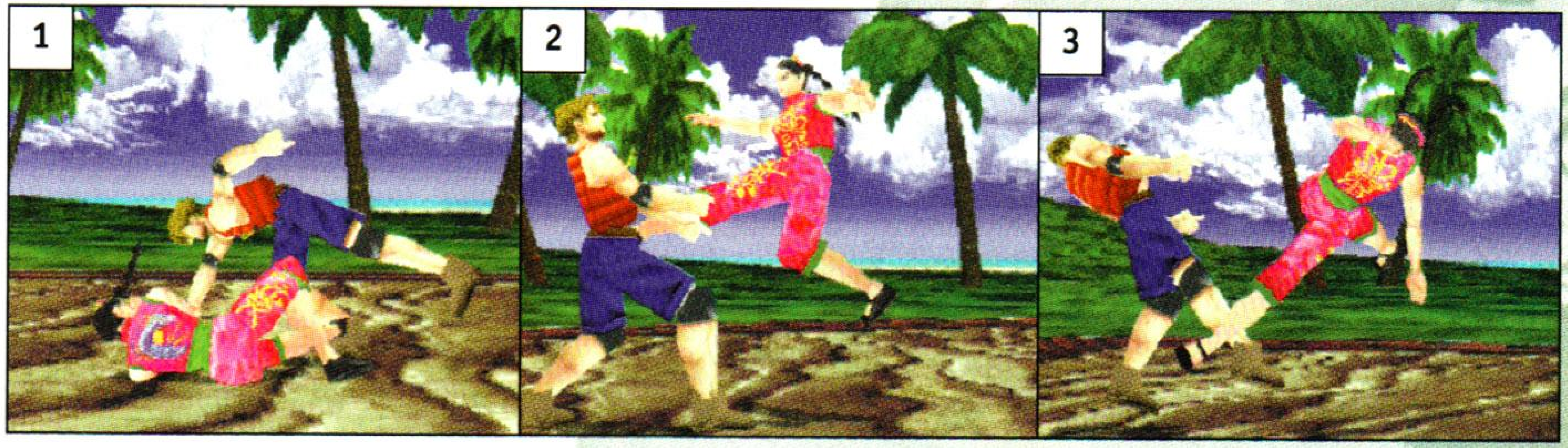


A good, yet simple combination to master with Pai is to start with a side-kick (DF+K) and follow up with a PPP-D+K combination. This is really a combo for beginners.



This is a very good attack - somersault over the crouching opponent (F+P+K+G) and use the double flying kick (UF+K+K). This scores two very easy hits and shows Pai's versatility well.

This move is really a variation of the above, but more damaging. Just start with the B-D+P+G throw instead.

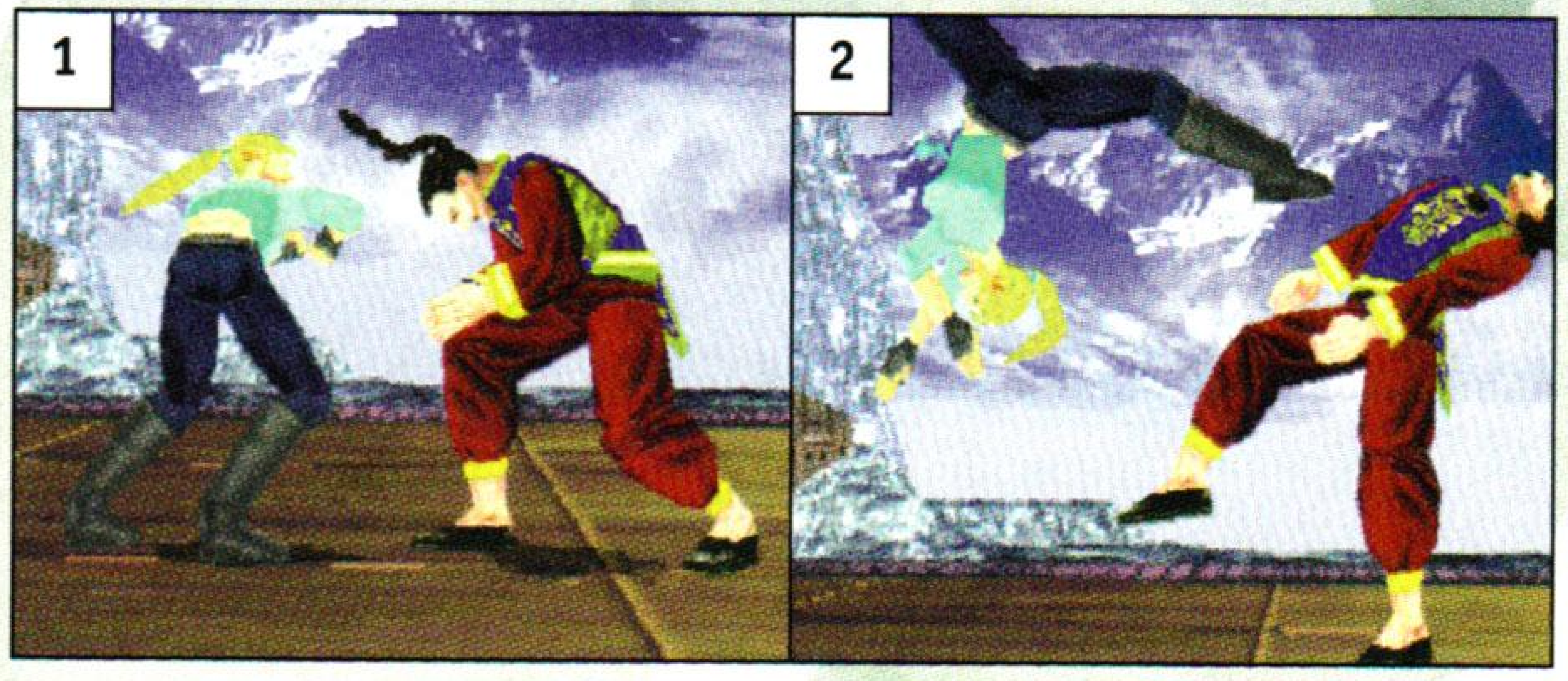


SARAH BRYANT

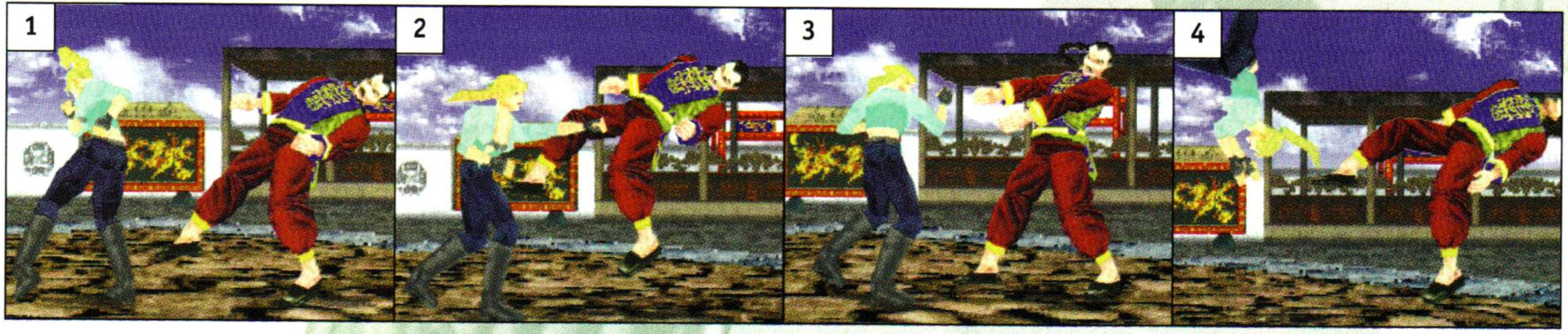
In the first version of Virtua Fighter, Sarah was incredibly powerful thanks to her PPPK (and derivative) combination attacks. She's still got all of those irritating moves in the sequel and her capacity for more skillful combinations has also been upgraded significantly. In very basic terms, she's quite similar to Jacky in what types of combos she can pull off - she's even got the same floating moves, although there are one or two extras added to her repertoire. In short, Sarah is just too powerful as it is - once you've mastered her combos, only the likes of Akira stand in her way.

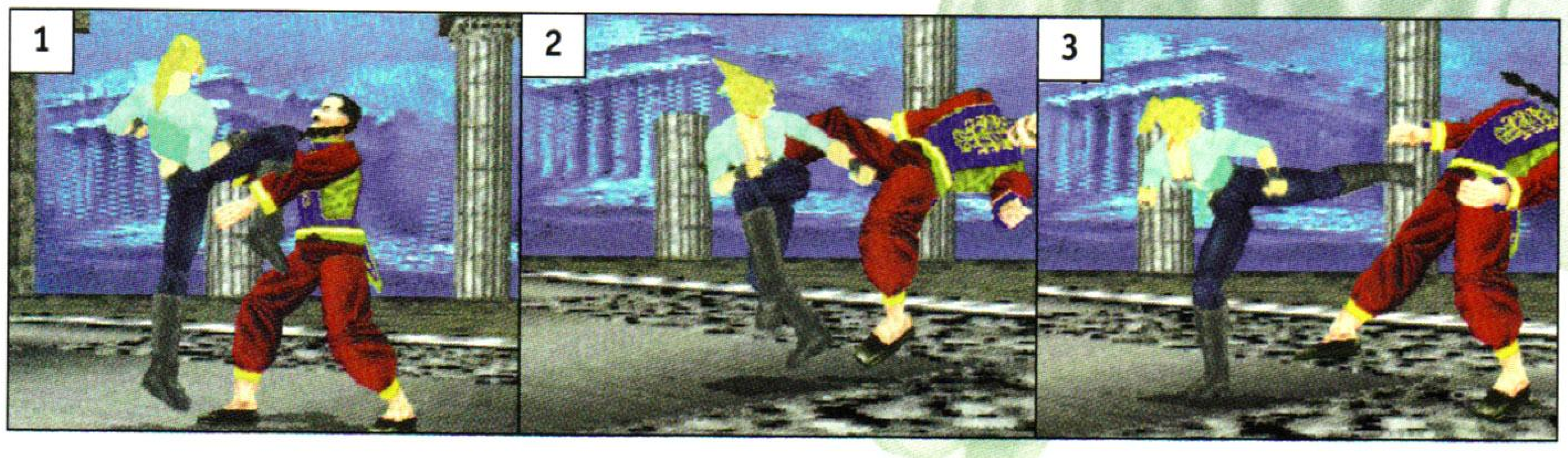
RECOMMENDED COMBINATION TECHNIQUES

Sarah is yet another character to use the knee (F+K) in a lot of her floating combinations, although her basic kick when she has her back turned on her opponent also has some intriguing possibilities. One of her most surprising float moves is the basic spinning kick (U+K). When used as a counter, it's quite surprising just how much height you can get off it. If you're after staggering hits, you'll be quite surprised to see how ineffectual the old side-kick (DF+K) is here - stick to elbows only (F+P). In fact as some of the combos on this page show, there's quite a lot to be said for the elbow, which has incredibly short recovery time.



The above stagger combo works for both Sarah and Jacky. The elbow's recovery time is so short that Sarah is ready to kickflip (BU+K) after the elbow even though the opponent is still staggered.





Sarah's back kick(B-B+K followed by K) is a good floater. You can immediately follow up with the PPPK derivative combination of your own choice. This is useful to know, but you probably won't use it that often.

Start off the combination with a knee (which counters) and follow up with D+K+K.

KAGE-MARU

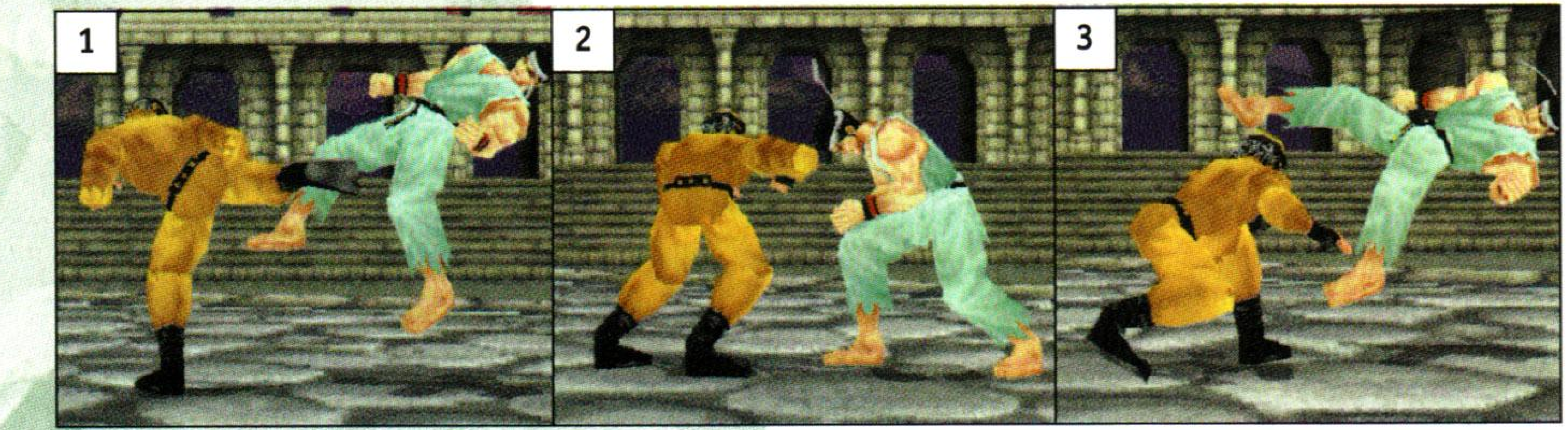
The VF ninja returns with his "jack of all trades" techniques still delivering many a killing blow to his opponents. As everyone knows by now, he has been significantly upgraded since Virtua Fighter 1 and is now second only to Akira in terms of power and versatility. What is quite surprising to any VF expert is the sheer lack of floating techniques Kage has in his repertoire - he hasn't even for the requisite knee attack. This ninja prefers to stagger his opponents, which he is (in all fairness) quite good at. Also, bear in mind his ground kick (F-F+K) which seems to always get an extra hit in if the opponent has been floated.

RECOMMENDED COMBINATION TECHNIQUES

Although the side-kick (DF+K) does have some potential, most Kage players go for stagger combinations. However, arguably, Kage has the best floating move of all - the ten foot toss (B+P in close) which is the basis for most of his combinations.

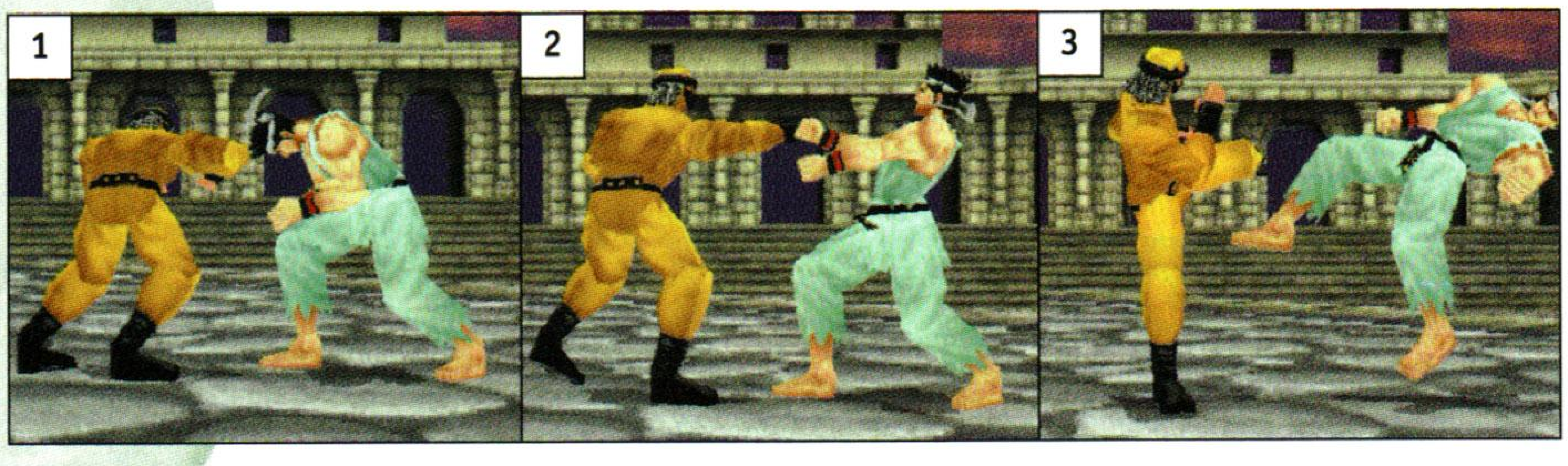
We've attempted to show you the full breadth of possible Kage combinations here by showing the full monty - staggers, floaters and move-buffered combos. There's no denying this guy's sheer versatility, although easy floats are out of the question.

VIRTUA FIGHTER'S NINJA CHARACTER RETURNS - AND NOW HE IS EVEN MORE POWERFUL! WITH HIS NEW TECHNIQUES, HE IS A DEADLY OPPONENT

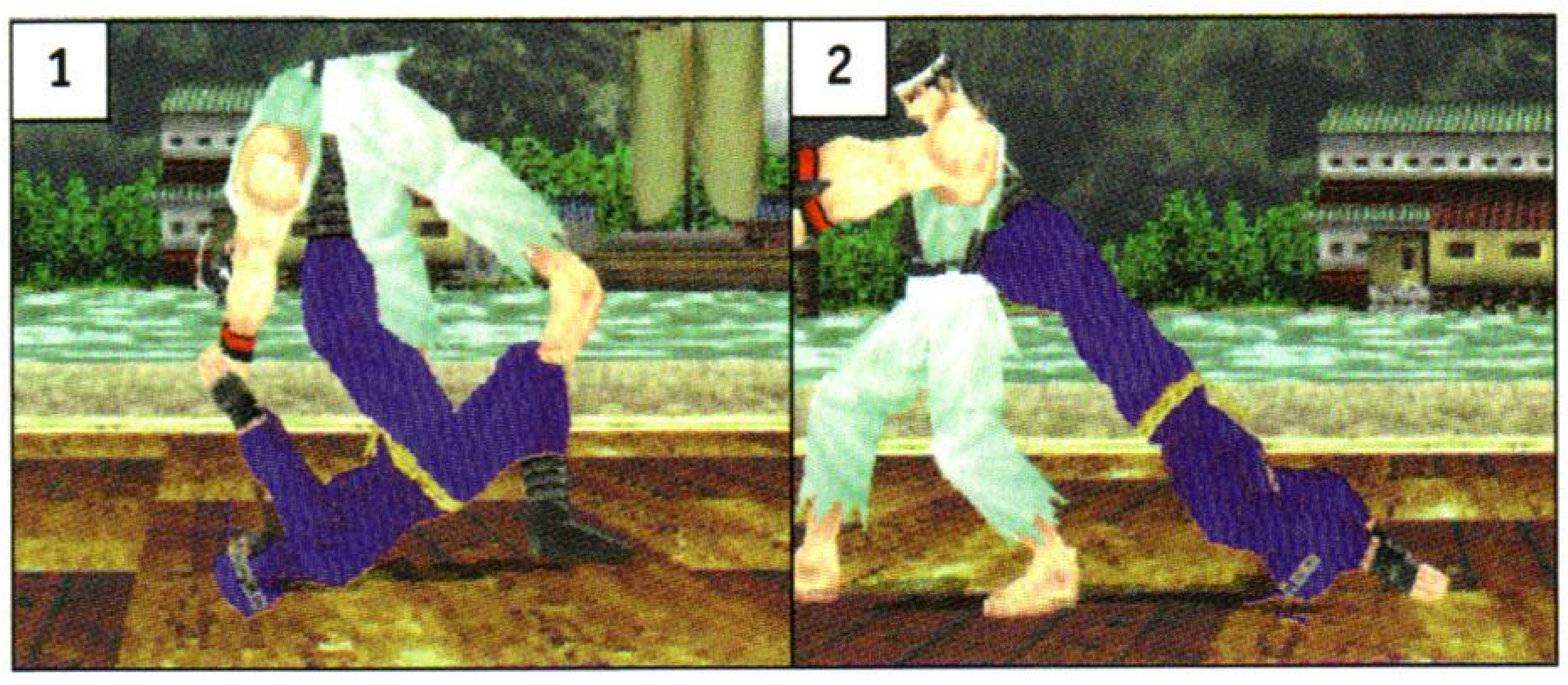


A simple combo to begin with (left). Kage floats the opponent by using a side-kick (DF+K) as a counter, follows with an elbow (F+P) and finishes off with a F+F+K sweep. This is a good example of the sweep's versatility.

The bottom combination is a very quick and easy stagger chain at which Kage is adept. An elbow begins the combo and it's followed with a PK strike. You could even try following up with a F+F+K sweep if you really feel like attempting it.



Our last Kage combination to the right is an old favourite. Start with the ten foot toss throw (B+P up close) and follow up as you please. A PPPK combination works well, as does the pounce (F+F+P+K+G). It's best to experiment here.



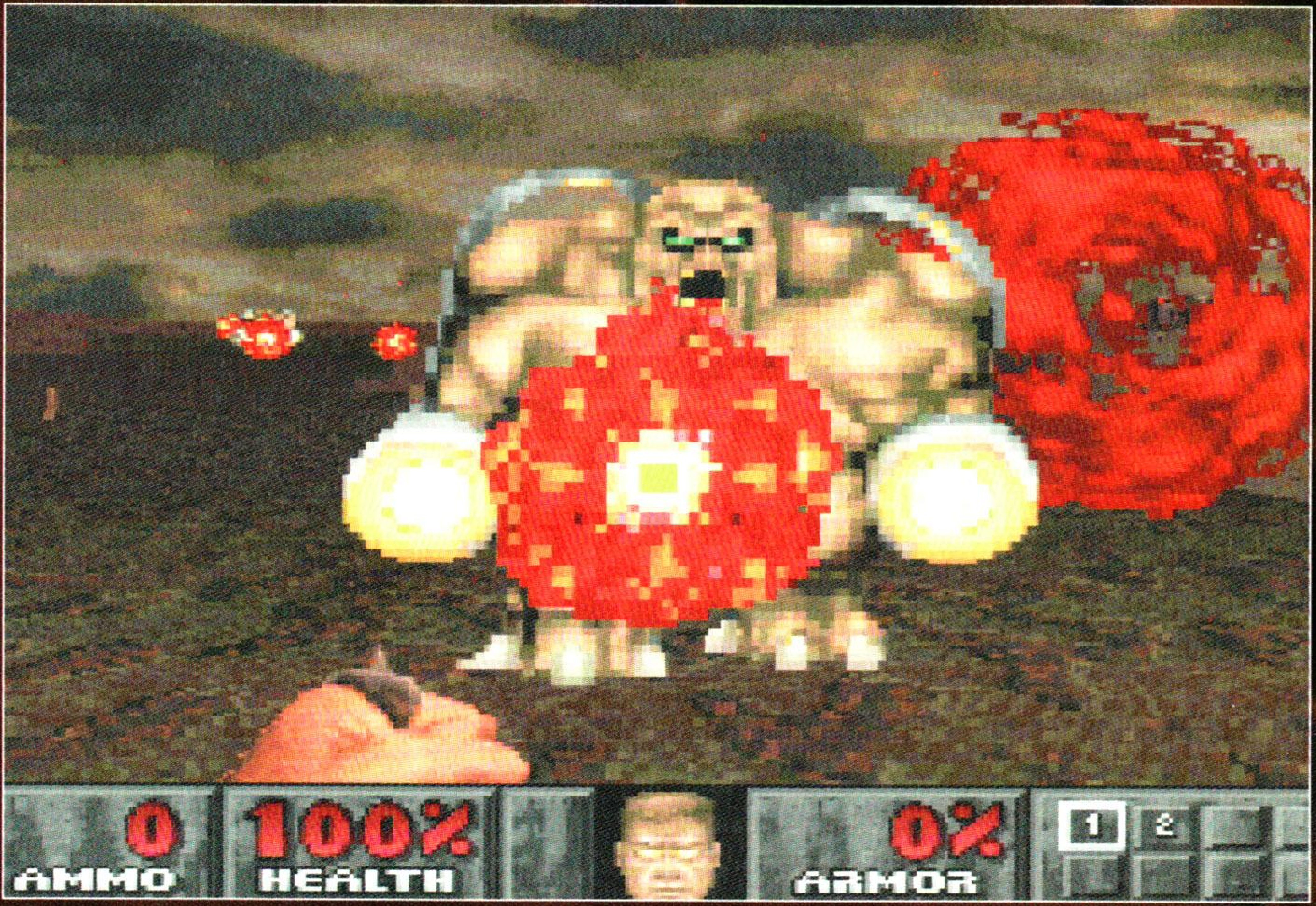
THE TEN-FOOT TOSS IS ONE OF THE BEST THROWS IN THE GAME AND HAS MUCH COMBINATION POTENTIAL!

DOOM - Summon supernatural powers and travel through huge horrific hidden hideaways!

PLAYSTATION DOOM - CHEATS, TIPS AND TERRIBLE SECRETS TO BE FOUND!

As our mammoth PlayStation Doom coverage draws to a close, **MAXIMUM** presents the final installment for this phenomenal title. Issue two gave you all the information you needed for a professional approach to combating the demons from hell, issue three provided in-depth information to Deathmatch and Cooperative antics, and now we round off the **MAXIMUM** Doom guide with all the cheats, codes and secrets you'll ever need. Be warned that the information contained within is for the serious Doomster who has played through the game on Ultra Violence without flinching, and needs to squeeze that extra week of gameplay from this title.

Take on the HELLISH SPAWN with a new and IMPROVED COMBAT MARINE!

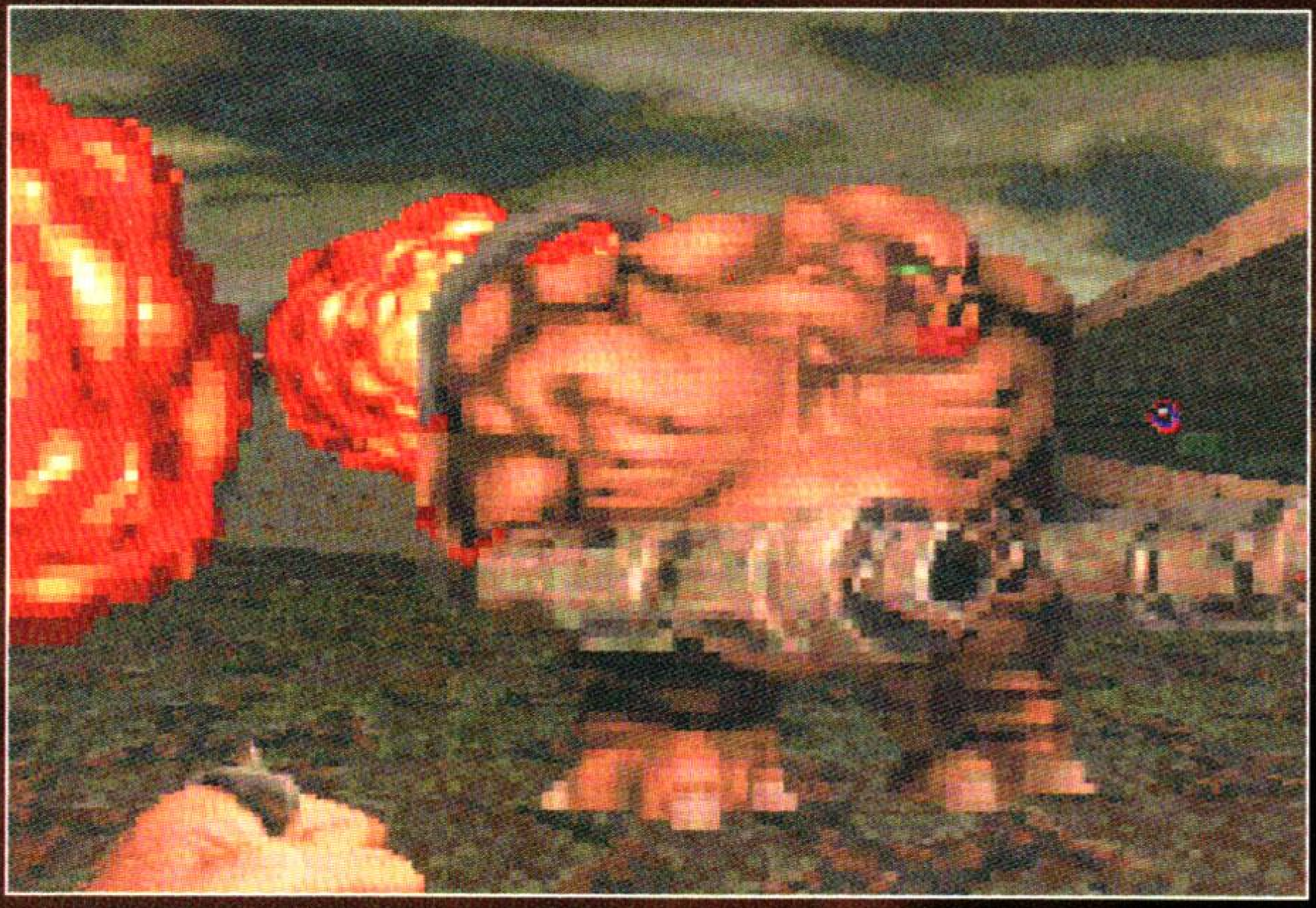


Feel NO PAIN with the GOD MODE!

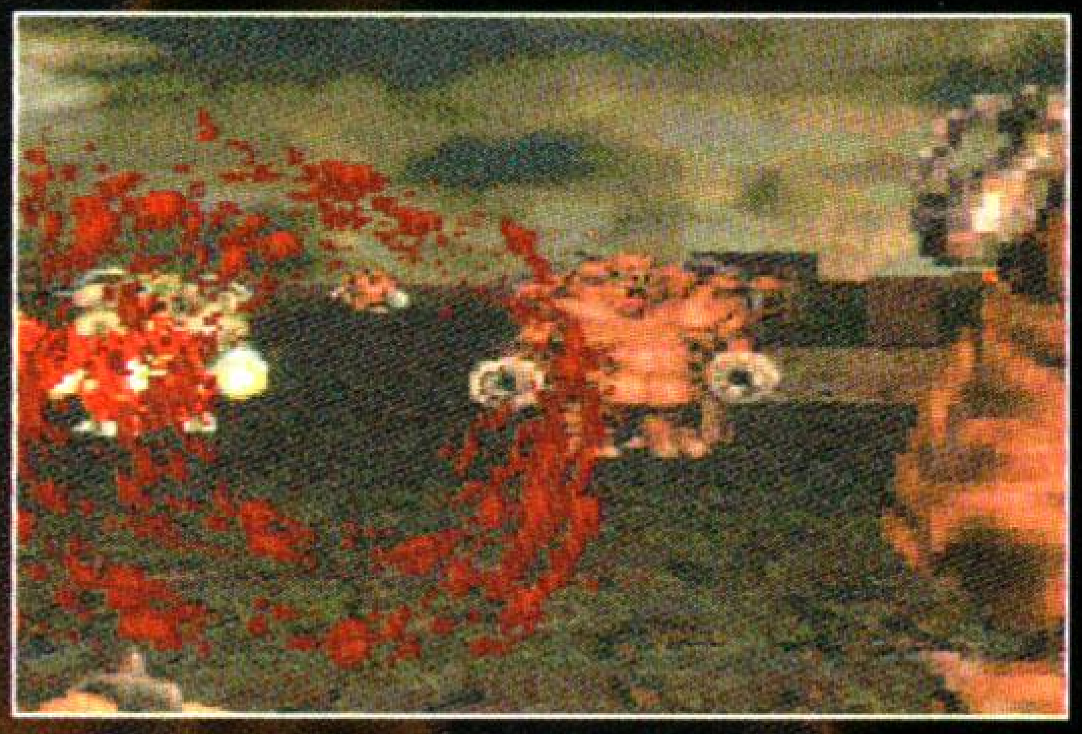
INPUT CODE: Down, L2, Square, R1, Right, L1, Left, Circle

Whilst tromping through the darkness on your way to hell, you may well wish for those advanced combat pills that Sergeant 'glazed' Williams used to take. Back in your army days, you remember that Williams returned from a solo mission where he took on an entire tank regiment with a flick knife. You wondered how he managed such an impossible feat, and then saw the reason; his eyes exuded a golden glow. You then surmised that Williams had entered the 'golden trance', an altered state whereby a soldier's entire body becomes encased in a skin-like substance that acts as bullet-proof armour. This technique was still quite new and the side-effects were too gruesome to even think about, but the results spoke for themselves. You decided to consult the army cybernetics corporation. Seven weeks later you felt like a new man. A synthetic layer of golden skin surrounded your skeleton, and this gave you immense protection when activated. You'd rather not go into your rather interesting new habit of sucking the entrails from every enemy you kill, but indestructibility has a price...

As you may well imagine, this code makes you permanently invincible to every single enemy in the game. You are impervious to bites, gunfire and even rockets. The demonic creature will still attack you as normal, but you feel no pain whatsoever. Simply pause the game, input the code and wait for the acknowledgement. You may then continue as normal, but with one important difference to your HUD; your eyes turn golden, as the serum of the trance kicks in.



This is God Mode in full effect! After you've paused the game and entered the cheat, you may continue your way through the levels of Doom without flinching from any monstrous onslaught. As you may be able to tell, the Mancubus is one of our favourite beasts, and we were really rather chuffed to be getting so close to so many of them without being toasted (above).



A unique level editor allowed the MAXIMUM team to recreate the third floor of Emap towers. Look! There's Jennifer, Annabel, Nina. Everyone!

More God Mode antics, as our hero decides to take on two Barons of Hell armed with nothing more than a spiked gauntlet (above and left). Notice the glazed expression on the combat marine's face; this is the way to tell whether your marine can stand extra punishment without breaking into a sweat.

A TRIPLE HELPING OF SMALL CHEATS!

LEVEL SELECT: Right, Left, R2, R1, Triangle, L1, Circle, Cross

Press the sequence of keys, and you may select any Doom level to start at (except for the secret areas). Bear in mind that you'll begin with only a pistol and your combat glove to defend you, so it may be wise to input the weapons cheat afterwards.

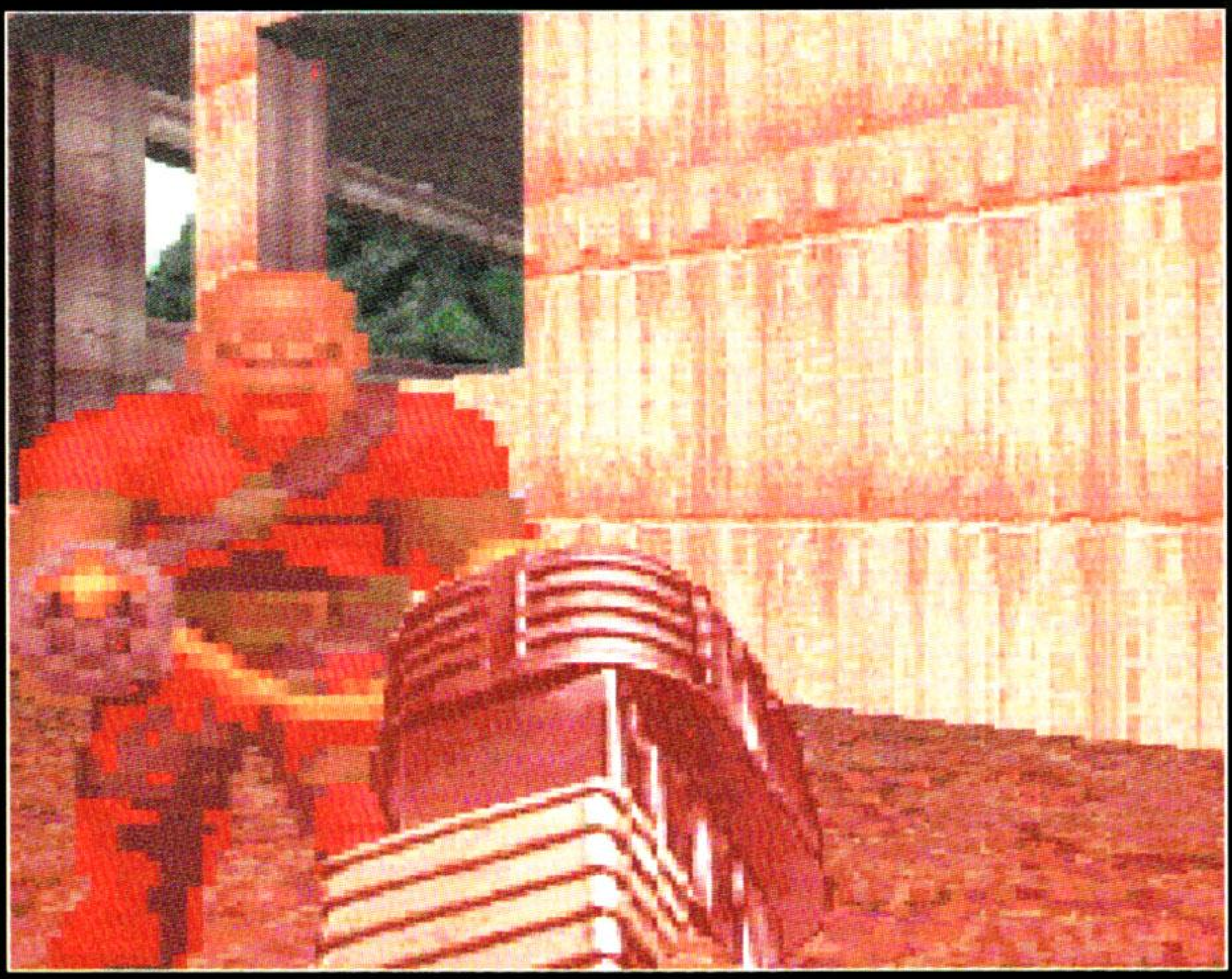
ALL MAP LINES: Triangle, Triangle, L2, R2, L2, R2, R1, Square

Upon becoming bemused or stuck on a certain level, employ this cheat to reveal all secret passages. This is just more than a map item, as it reveals trip-lines that need to be walked over in order for more fiendish puzzles to activate.

MAP REVELATION: Triangle, Triangle, L2, R2, L2, R2, R1, Circle

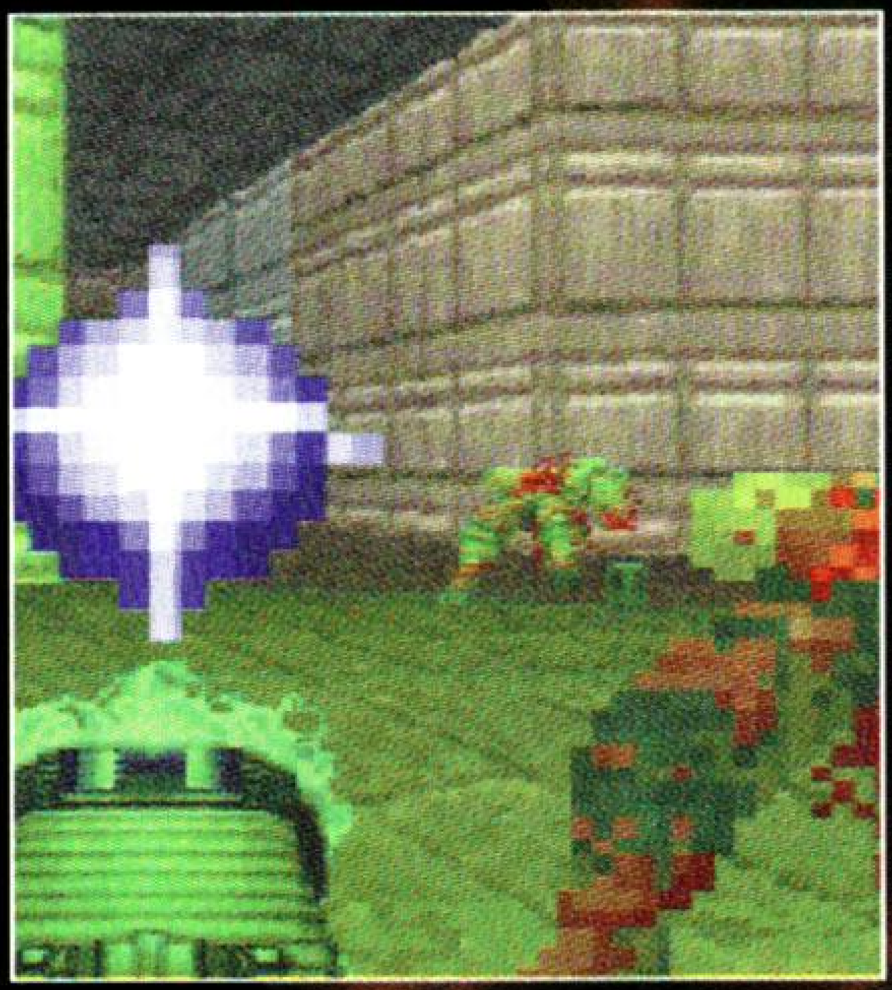
Input the code in the usual manner, and then immediately change to your map. Your display will now show every single item and monster (either living or dead) contained on the level as a blue triangle. This is of limited use, but enables hidden items to be located with ease.

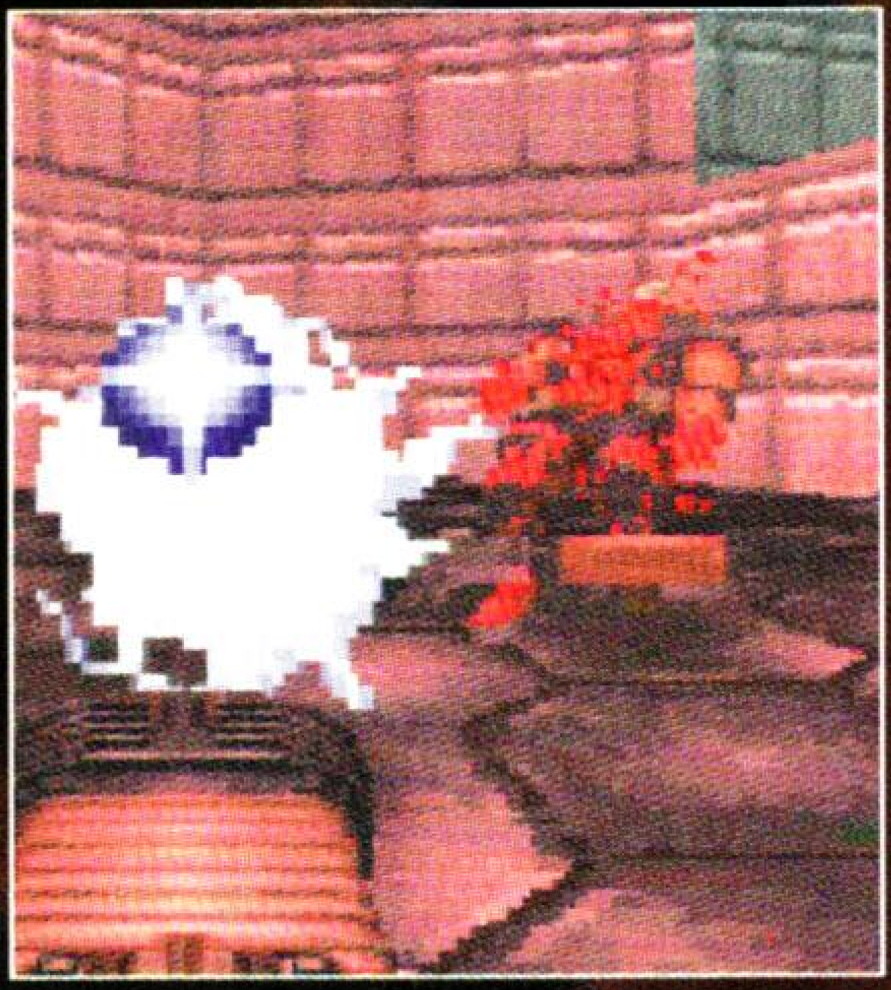
Load up with all THE WEAPONS you can!



INPUT CODE: Cross, Triangle, L1, Up, Down, R2, Left, Left

At any stage during your wanderings, you may also pause the action to input the weapons code. Once again, wait for the code acknowledgement to appear at the bottom-left hand corner of your screen, and then recommence your slaughter. This time your marine is able to take on the hellish adversaries with a entire complement of fully loaded weapons, as well as any keys you require to complete the level.



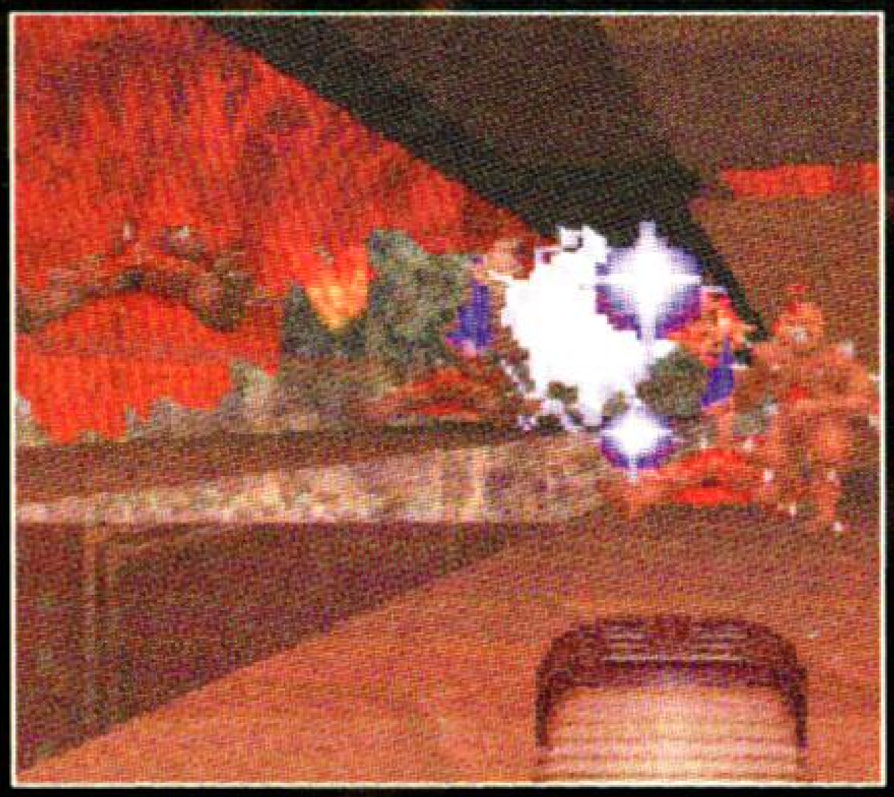


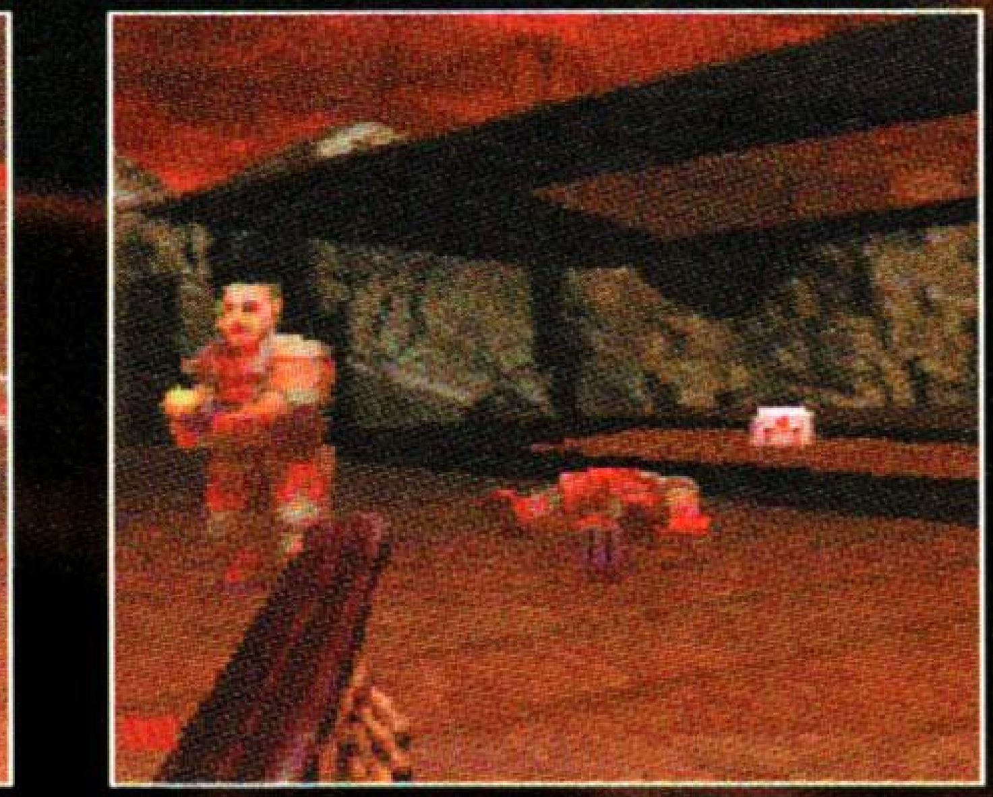
The perfect way to show off this cheat is to play through some of the earliest Doom levels armed to the teeth with the latest high-tech and heavy ordinance (left).

Achieve ENHANCED EYESIGHT with X-RAY VISION!

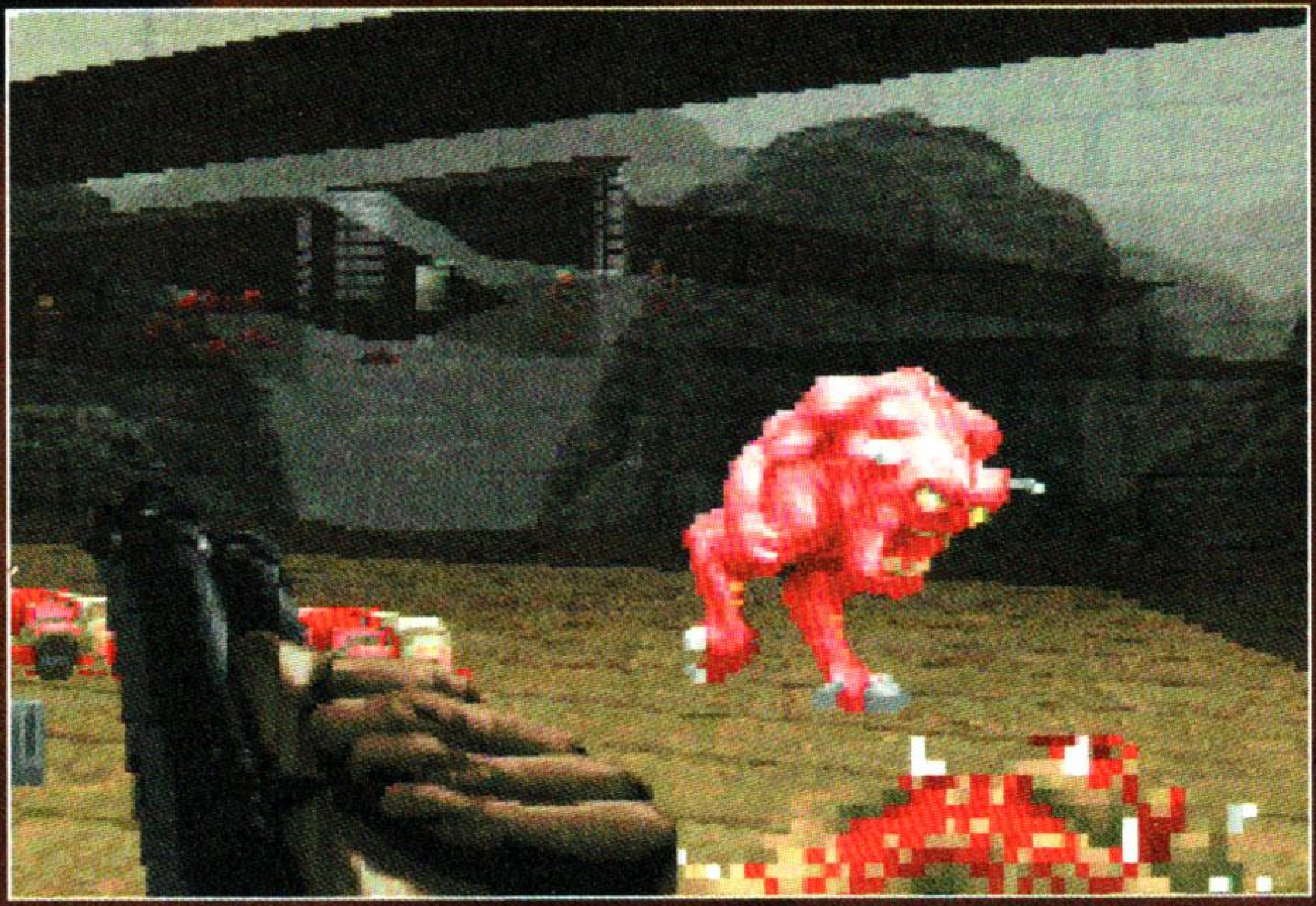
INPUT CODE: L2, R2, L2, R1, Right, Triangle, Cross, Right

This is a rather novel and interesting cheat that empowers your marine with a strange and other-worldly power. By flicking a small switch behind your left ear, your eyes distort and allow you to look through the walls of the current room you are standing in. This weird and narcotic-influenced view is quite confusing (just try employing it in the O of Destruction), but allows you to see deviants from behind corners and through walls.





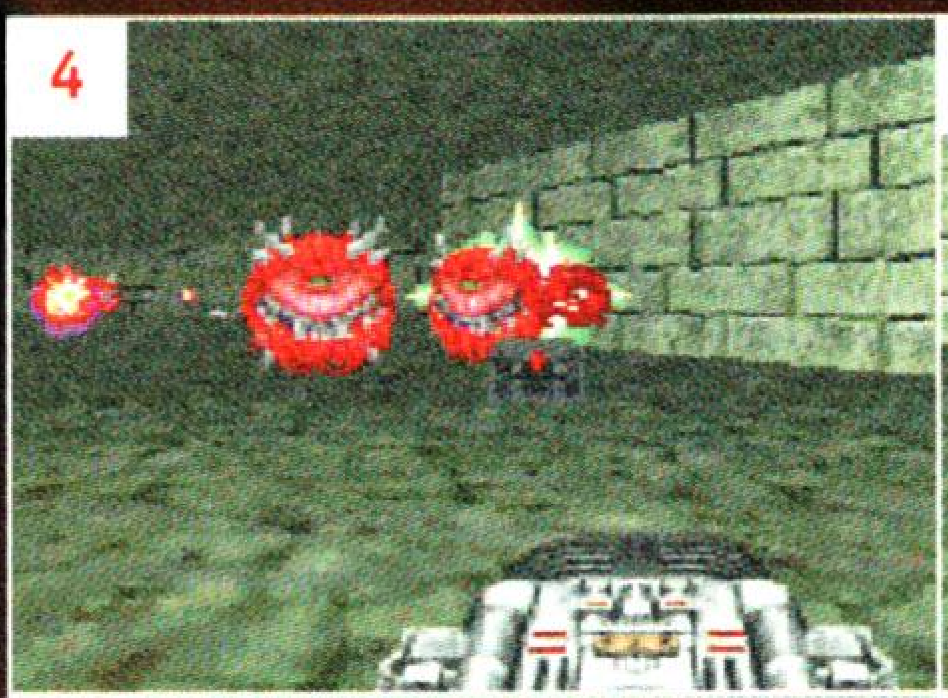
Some particularly impressive and freaky visuals await you in X-Ray vision mode! Our hero looks through the nearest two walls when this enhanced vision kicks in, and thus can sometimes see the background scenery from within a level. The PC version didn't have anything like this!



Become the supreme combat veteran - enter the SECRET LEVELS!

INPUT CODE: CKHDP33X35

A small but interesting level with a fair share of frothing monstrosities to cull. Starting in a green-walled chamber, fight through the numerous Barons of Hell, side-stepping like mad to avoid a green bolt or five. Then start your weapons collection in each of the eight anti-chambers before opening the oak door. Prepare for Cacodemon overload as a swarm of these giant tomato beasts threaten to overcome you, before collecting the power-ups and uncovering the exit. A simple jaunt that poses no threat or problem to an established Doomster.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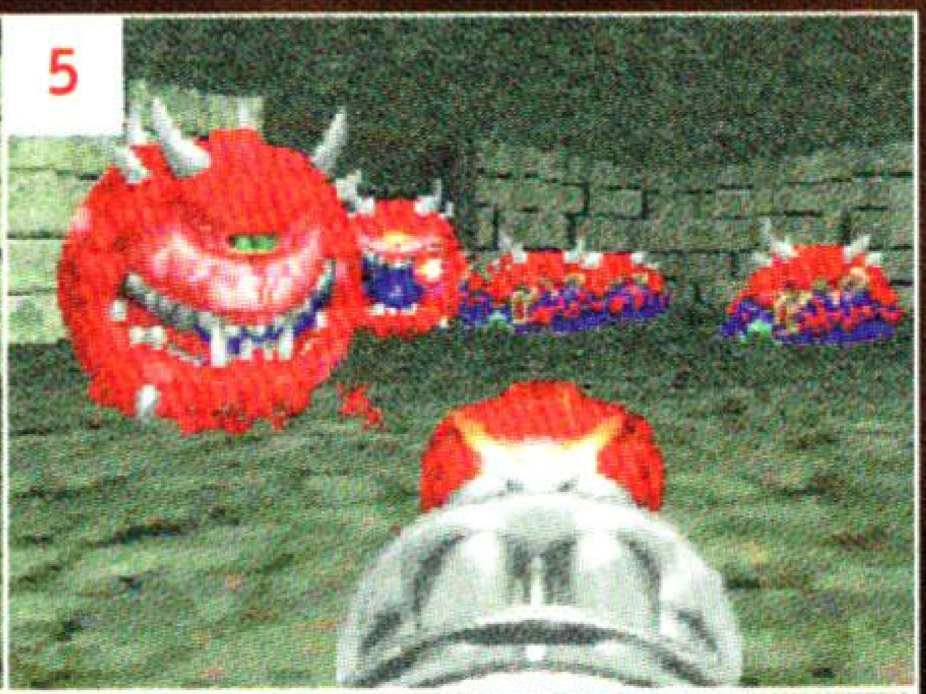
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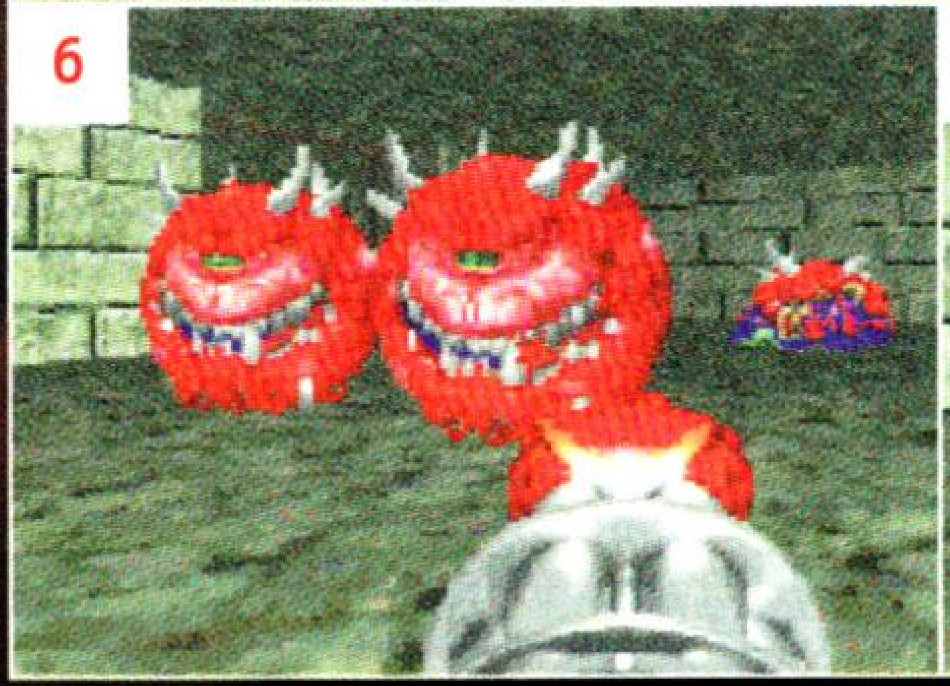
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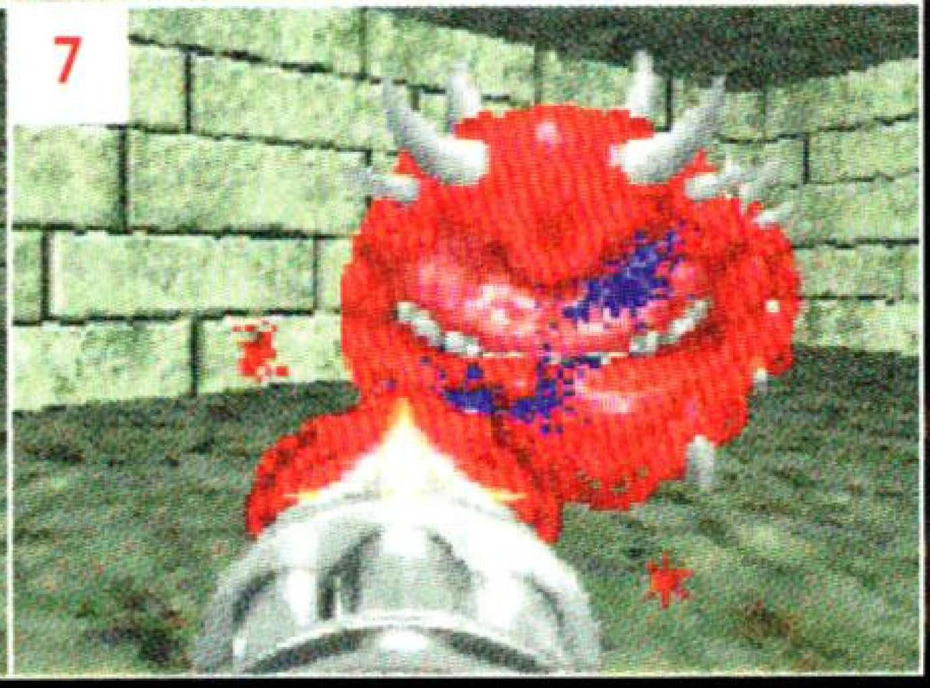
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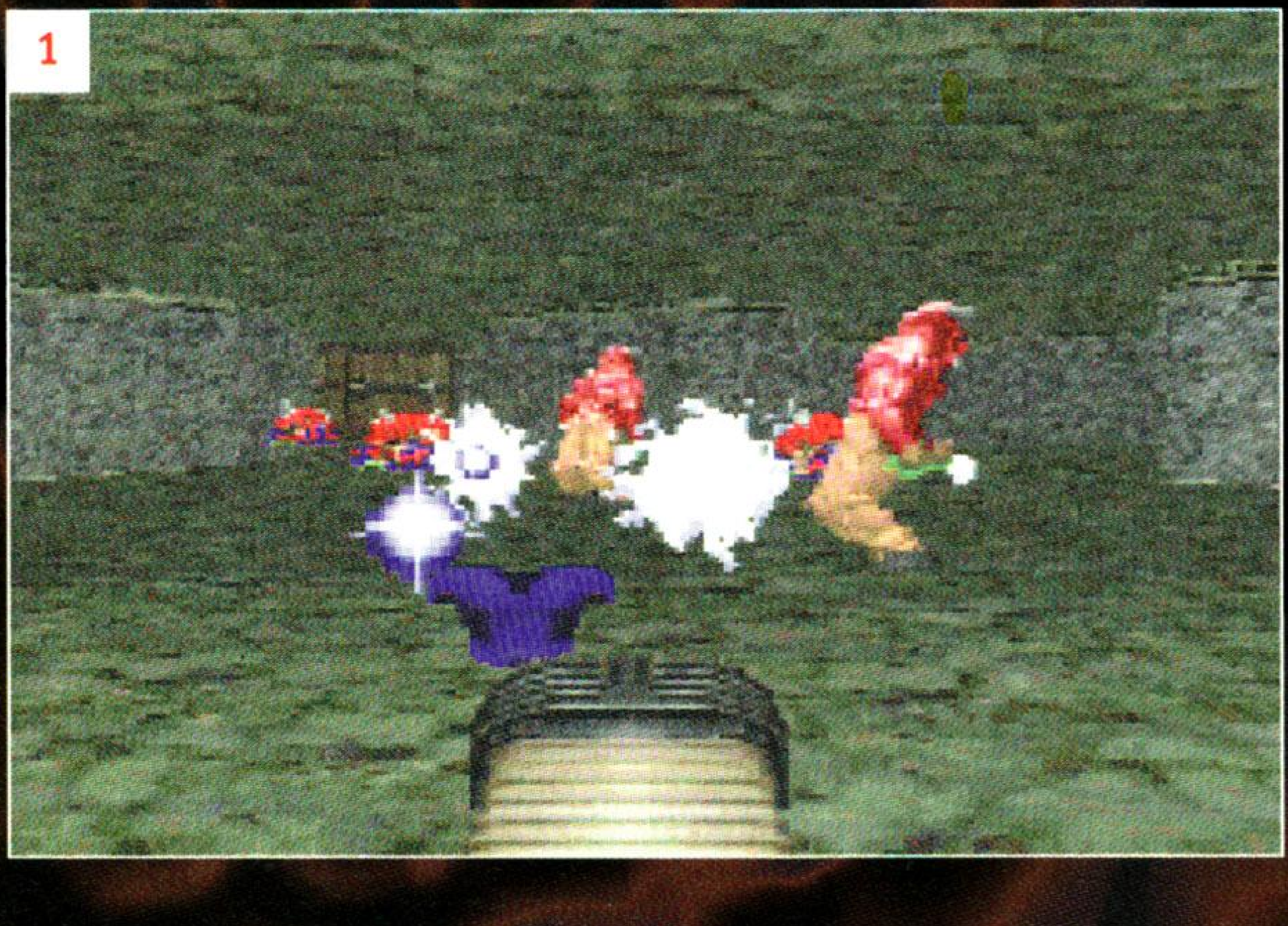
Enter the strange chambers of terror!
LEVEL 55 - FORTRESS OF MYSTERY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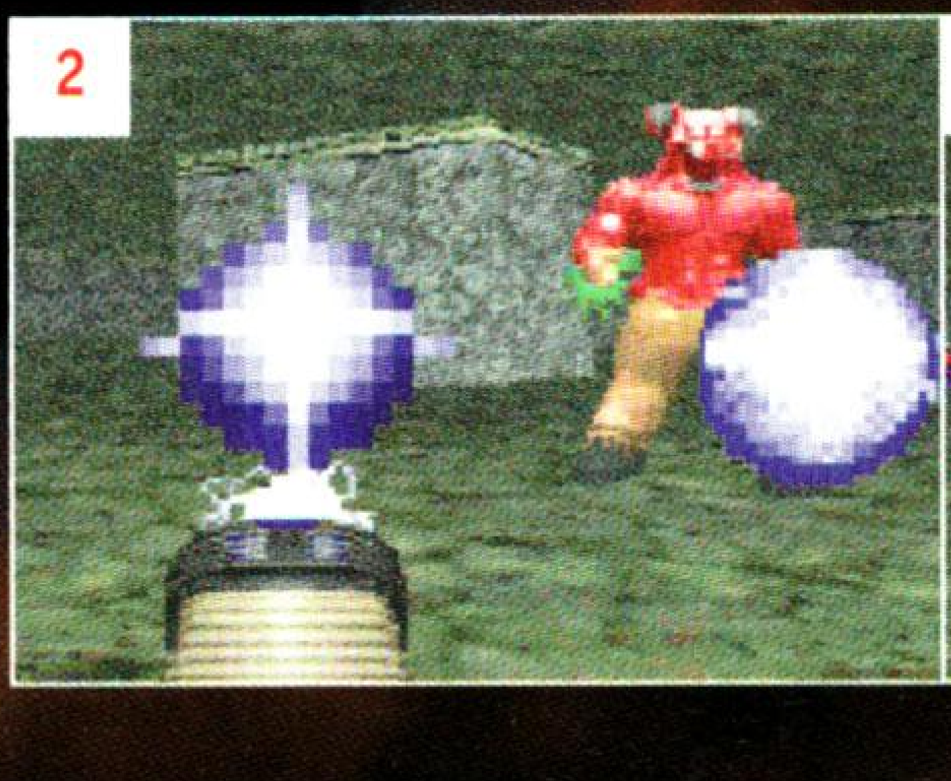
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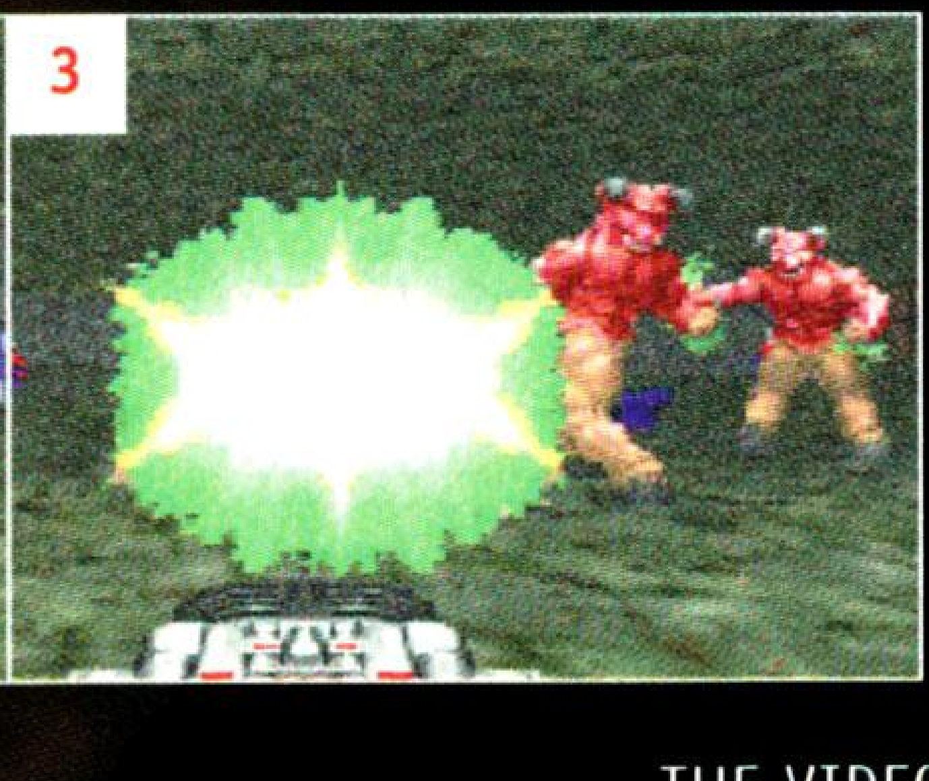
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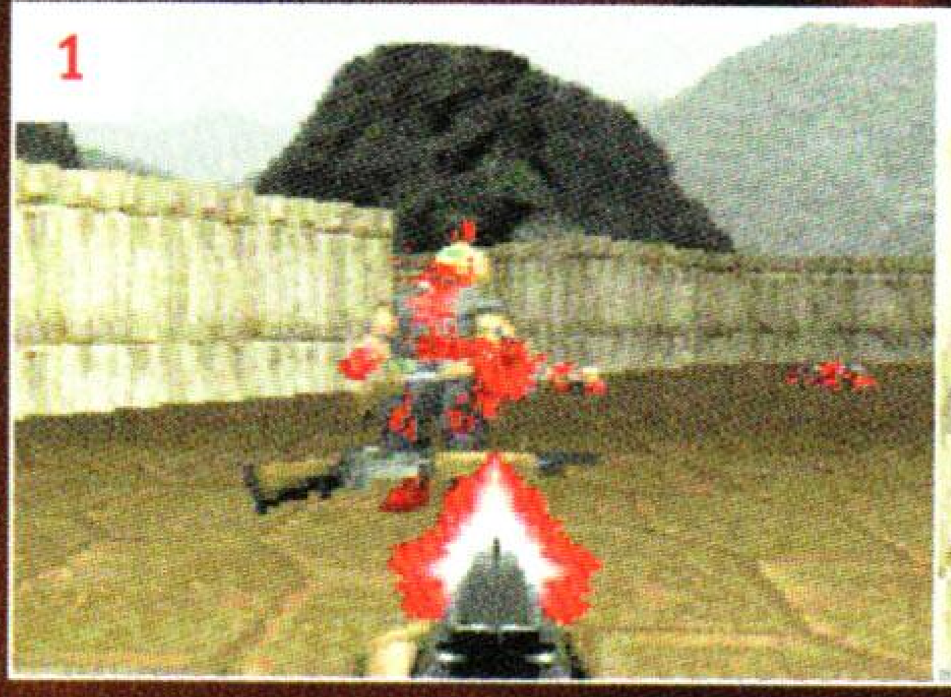
The action commences in this green walled room with a number of anti-chambers and snarling Barons of Hell (pictures 1 and 2). Quickly locate the heaviest weapons you can, side-step like a man possessed and launch a couple of meaty strikes to finish off these minotaurs with attitude (picture 3). Then continue through the door for more Tomato-based action than you can possibly handle (pictures 4-7)!

A hidden installation is being OVERRUN!

LEVEL 56 - THE MILITARY BASE

INPUT CODE: YCMZCPFPST

The first of the secret levels to be ventured through (providing the player isn't using these cheats) is surprisingly easy to find, but once you've appeared in the base, the action hots up to almost unmanageable levels. Numerous enemies, limited ammunition and some cunningly hidden items makes this a testing level for Doom virgins, and the exit itself is notoriously difficult to reach. Be prepare for a multitude of monsters and some radioactive waste to drag your disintegrating legs through!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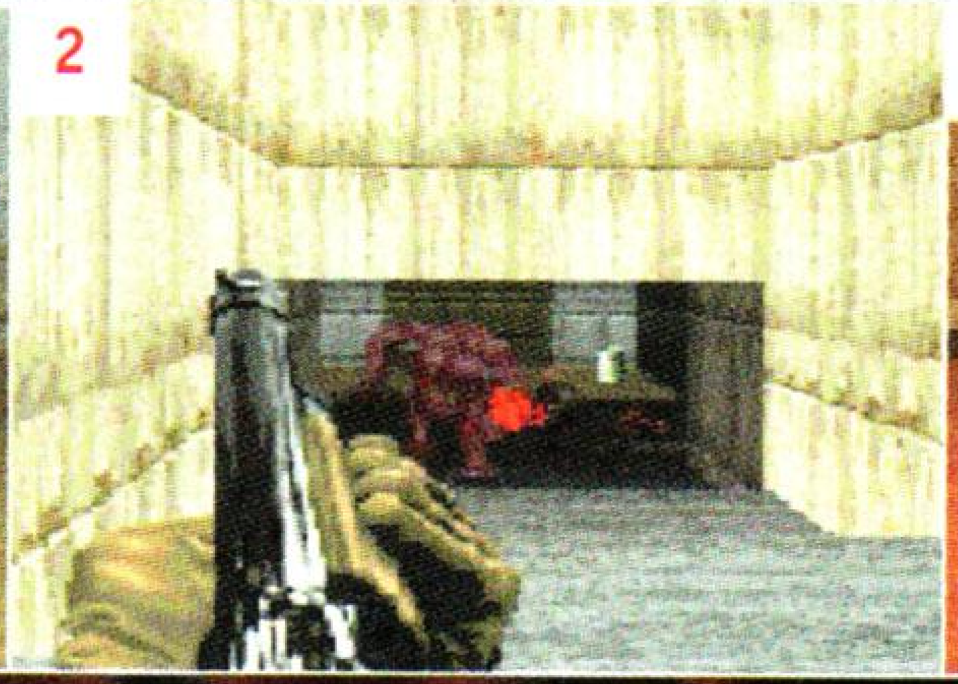
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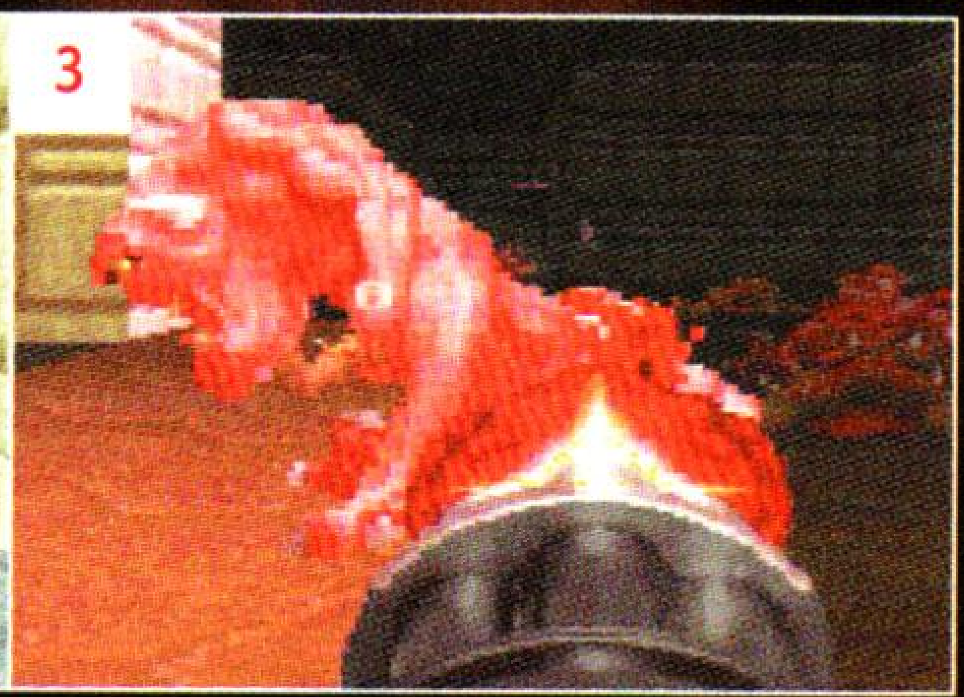
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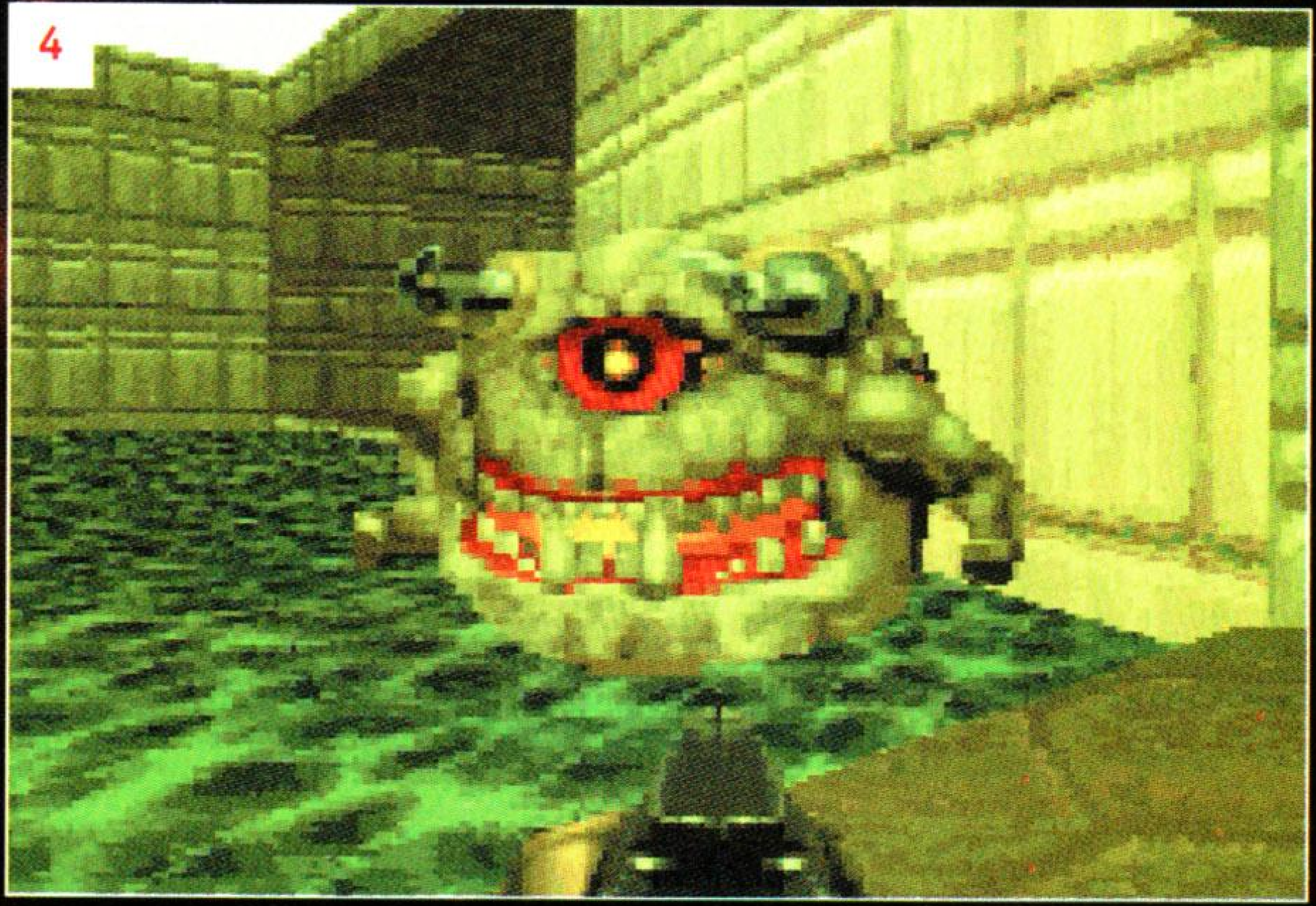
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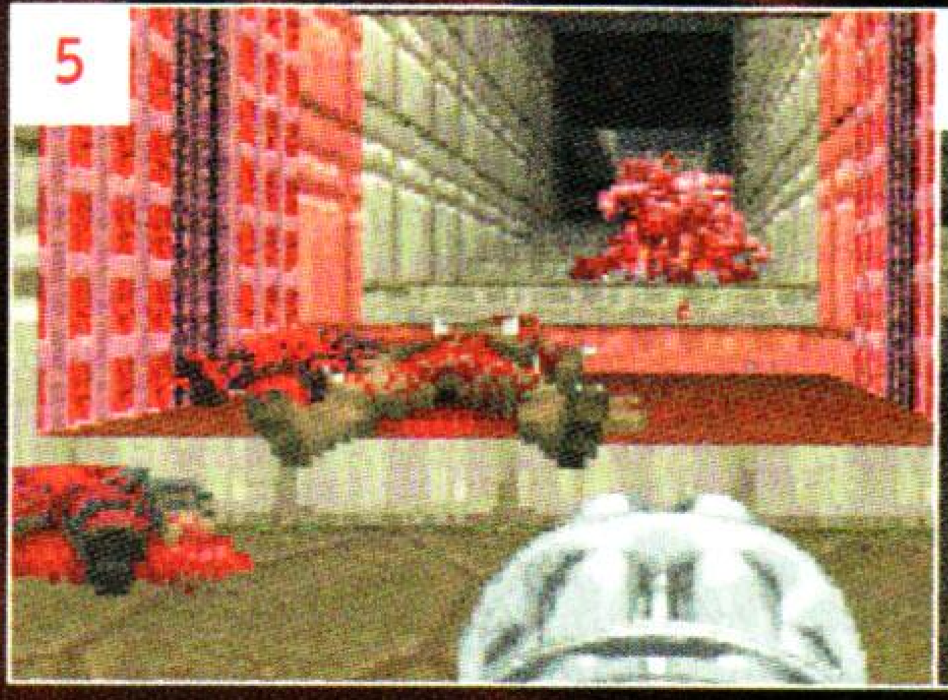
The start of the level places you in a highland enclosure with a variety of foes (picture 1). Choose an available entrance and wander through the doorways, shooting the vast array of beasties (pictures 2 and 3). We then discovered the secret area with a waiting Pain Elemental (picture 4). Have you?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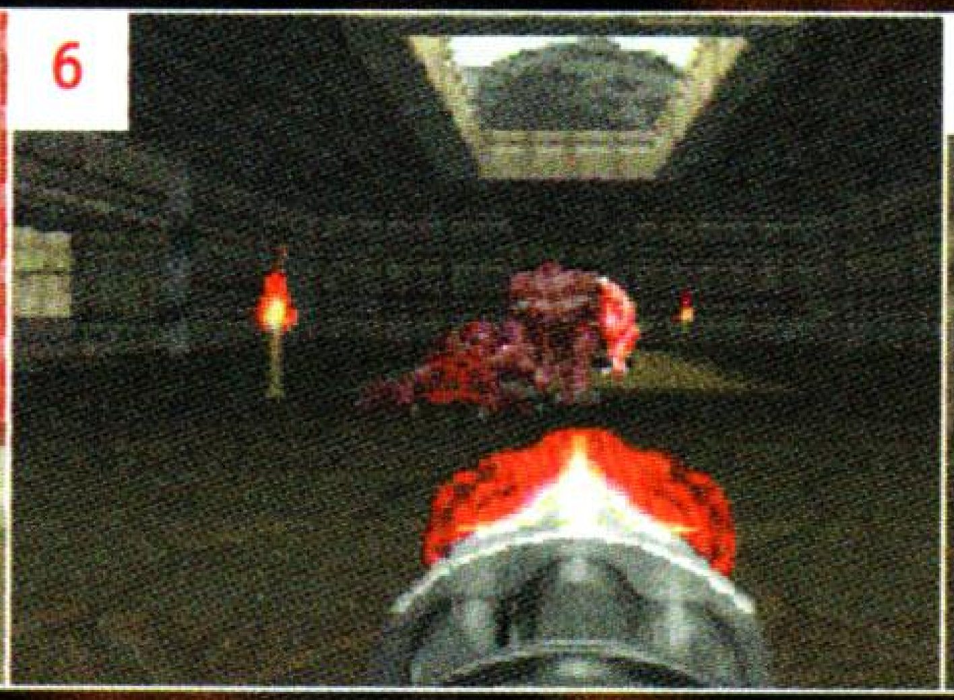
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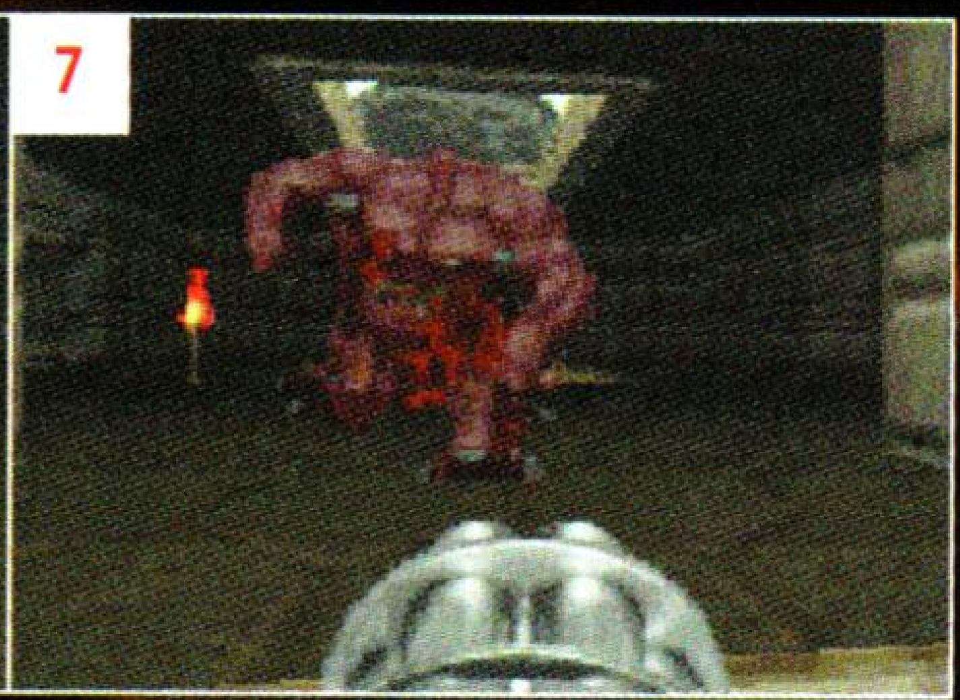
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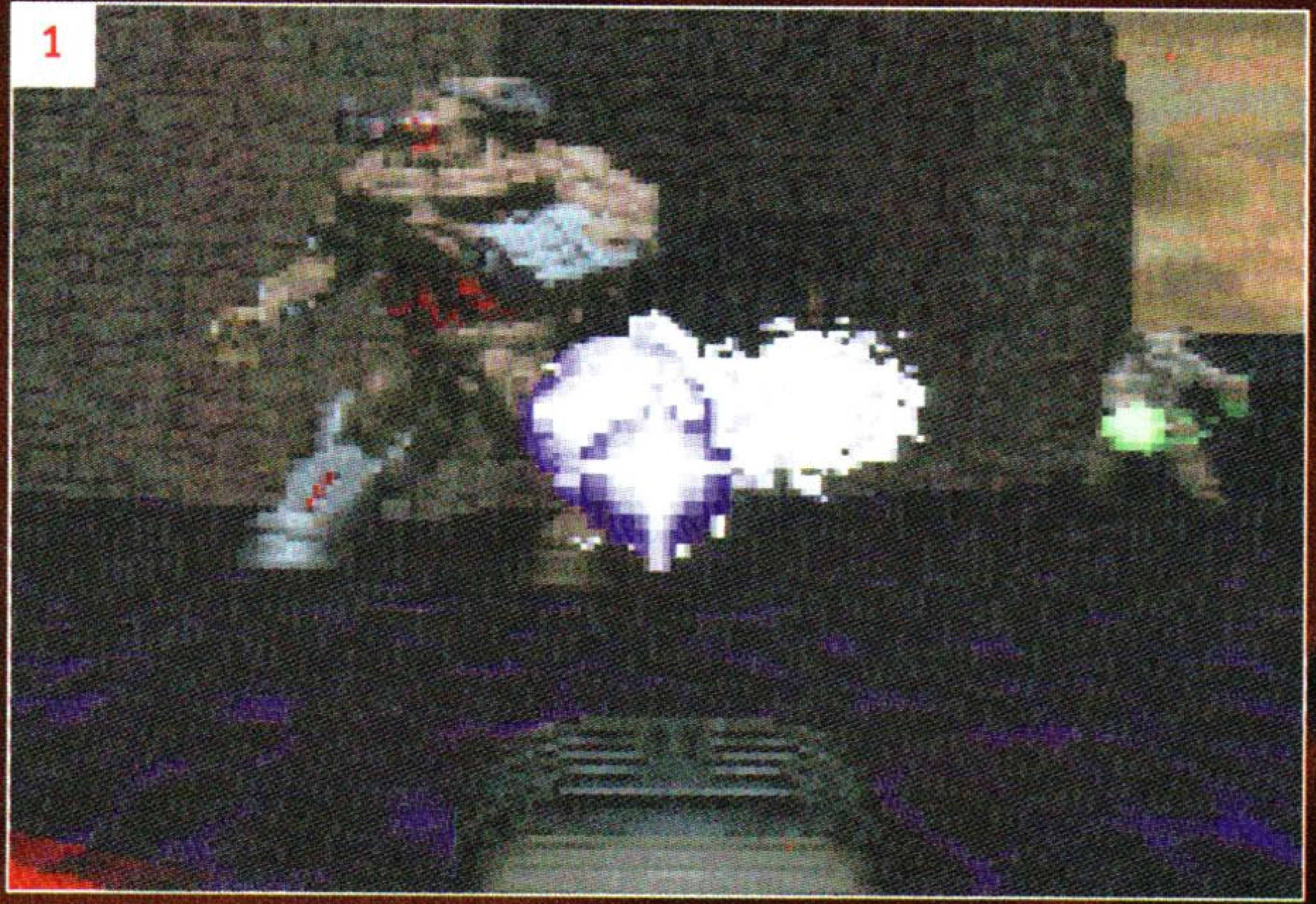
Growl, gnash plumph! Another couple of dark visitors receive a severe beating from a manic mini-gun wielding madman (pictures 5 to 7)! After the four rooms have been cleared, jump down into the slime to flick a switch that opens the exit - but watch for those Imps!

Wade through the dead in the SWAMP OF HORROR!

LEVEL 57 - THE MARSHES

INPUT CODE: WVX07TT0TR

The first of the PlayStation's first-rate secret levels requires a slight modicum of skill to blast through. Starting in an enclosed stone chamber, you quickly realise why these secret levels were meant to be played by true professionals, as a wander round the outside of the chamber reveals a Cyberdemon and two Hell Knights! Despite the gloom that hangs of the entire playing area (save for when you collect the night vision goggles located in a copse), this is an excellent and entertaining level that also makes a great Deathmatch, due to the small playing area, and numerous vantage points.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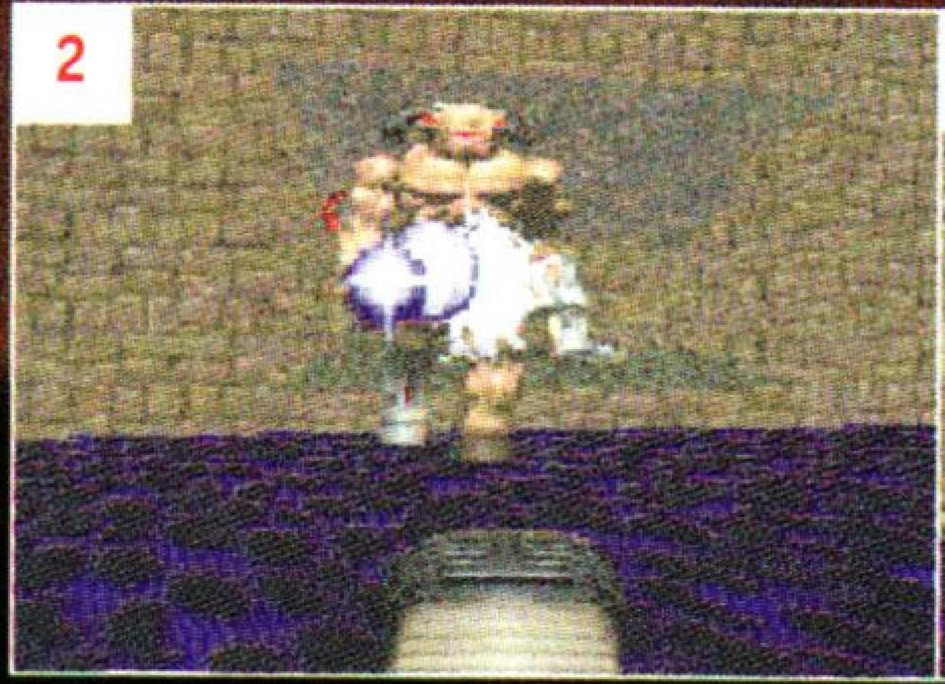
A full-on Cyberdemon death experience (pictures 1 to 3)! We started this level in relative safety, but were soon dodging and weaving with the best of 'em. We launched a multitude of plasma rounds at him and he just laughed them off! Then we changed to the double-barrelled shotgun and tried a little more 'persuading' but he wasn't having any of it. We then ran away after he shook off another BFG blast (picture 4).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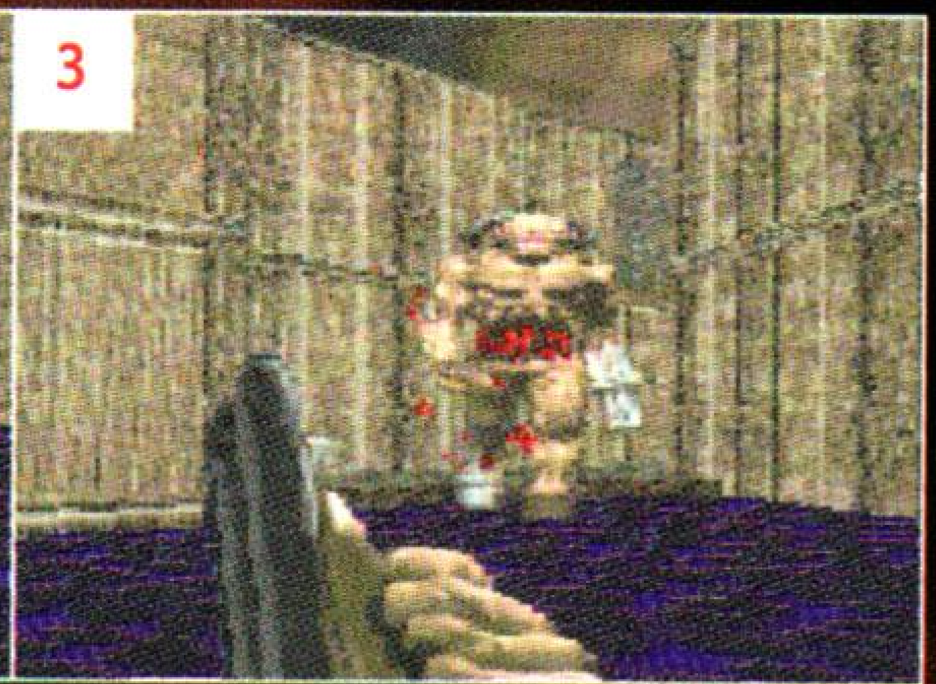
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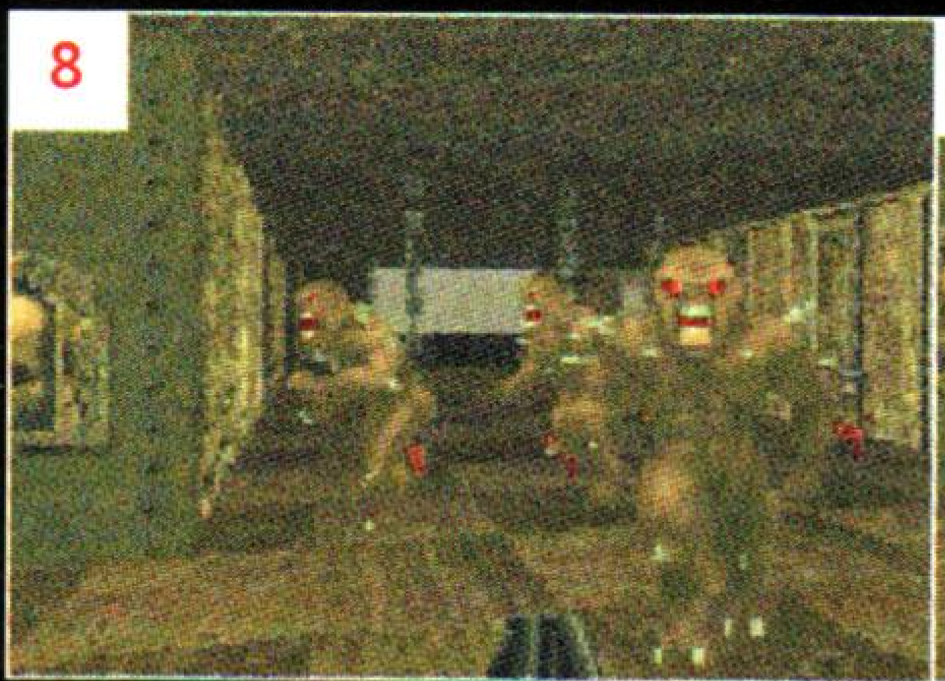
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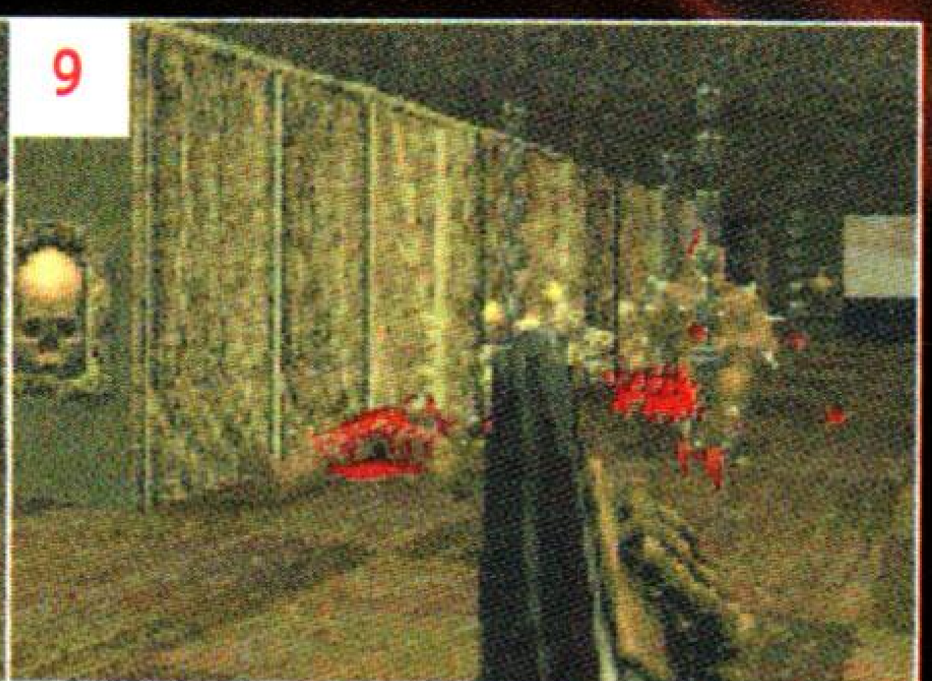
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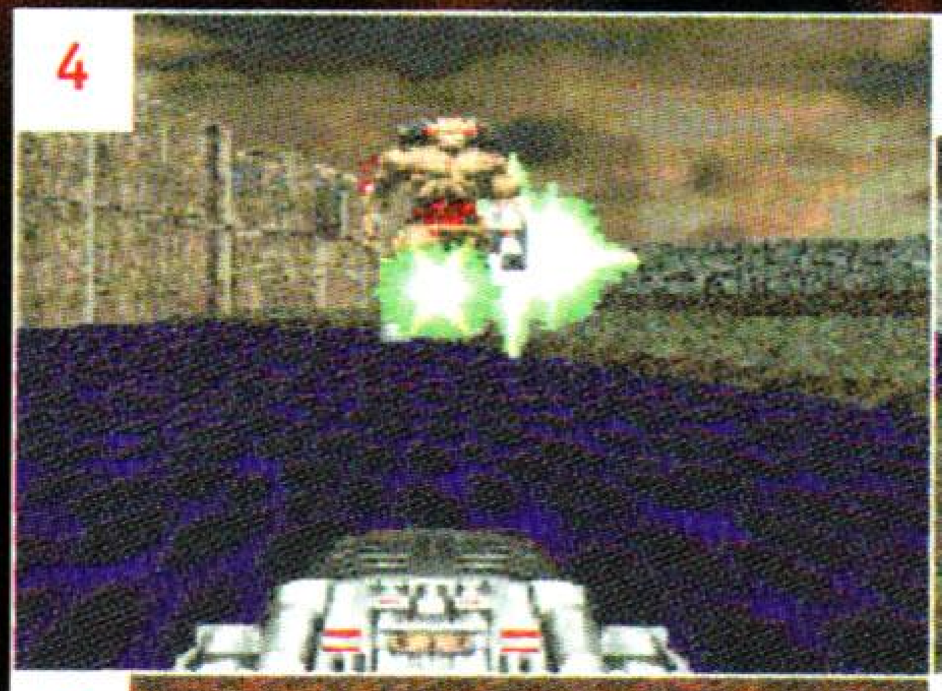
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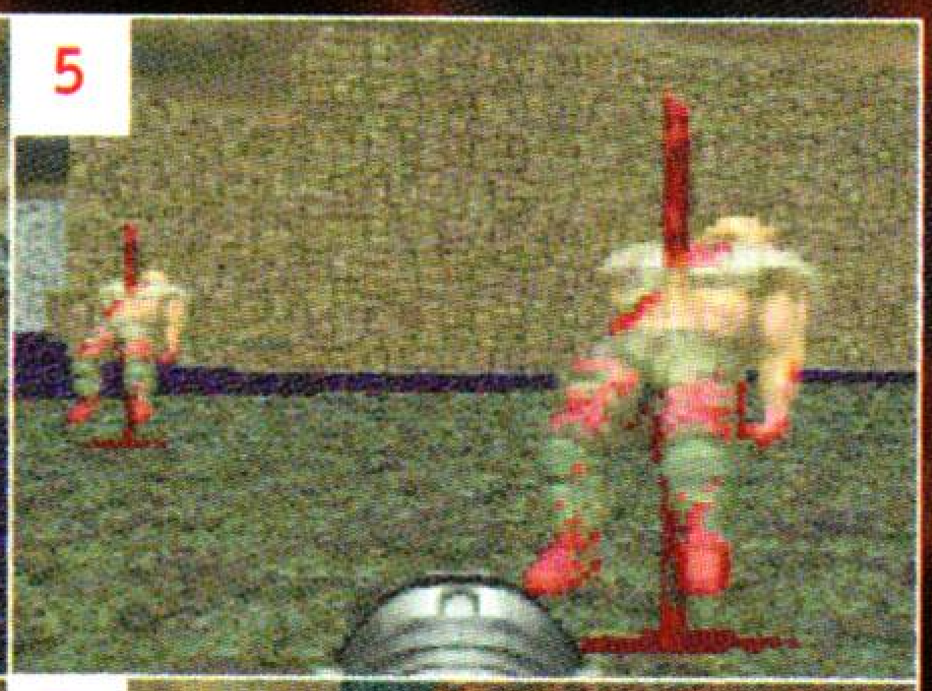
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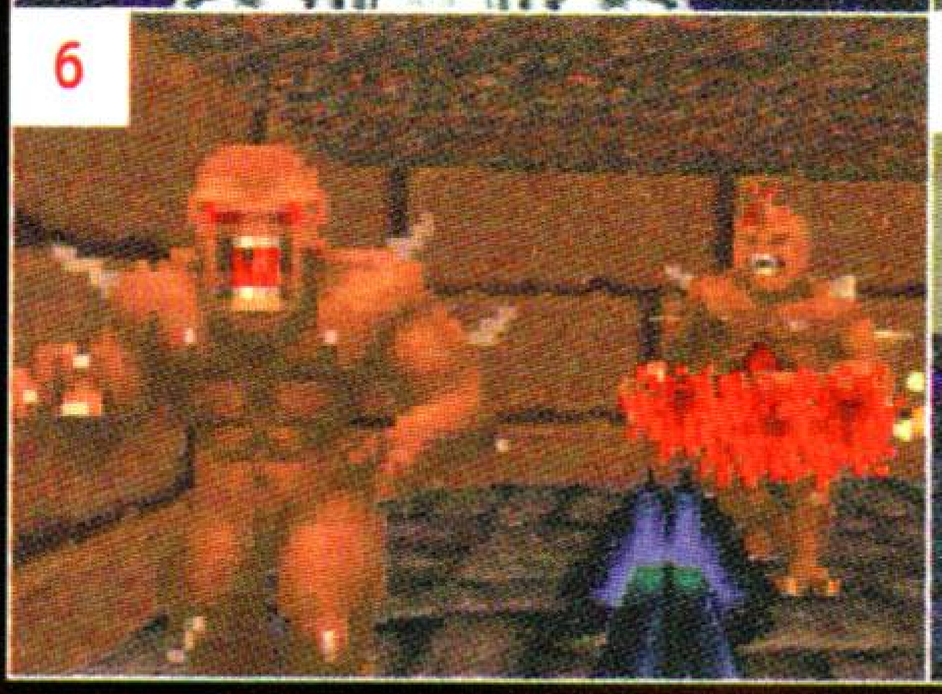
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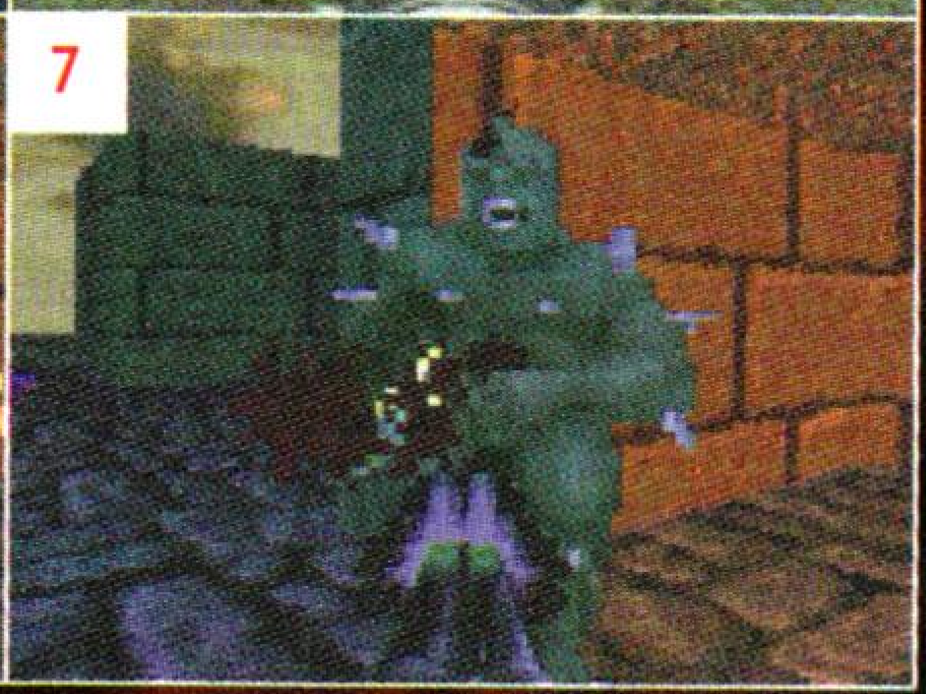
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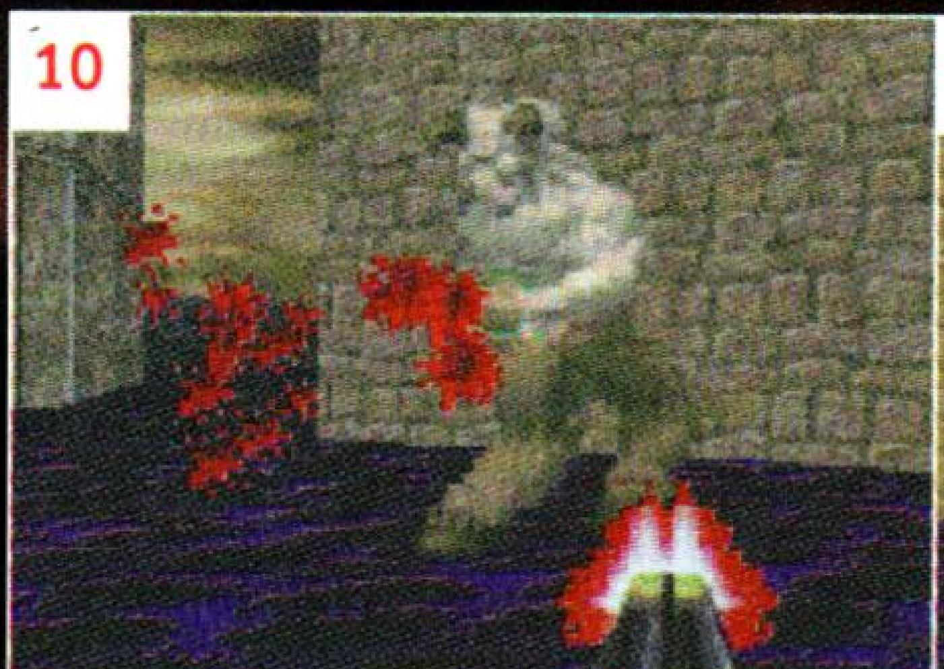
Leaving the Cyberdemon to stomp around on his own, we investigated the rest of the level. My, we thought, what a pleasant death that chap must have had (picture 5). Then we entered one of the buildings and were met with an Imp welcoming committee (pictures 6 and 7). Another building, and another load of Imps; this time we dodged the rather unpleasant (and bloodied) meathooks (pictures 8 and 9). Finally, we couldn't stand that metallic stomping anymore, and returned to dish some death. First the Cyberdemon's right-hand man bought the farm (picture 10) before the big fellow decided to throw a seven (picture 12). Hooray! Now where's that exit?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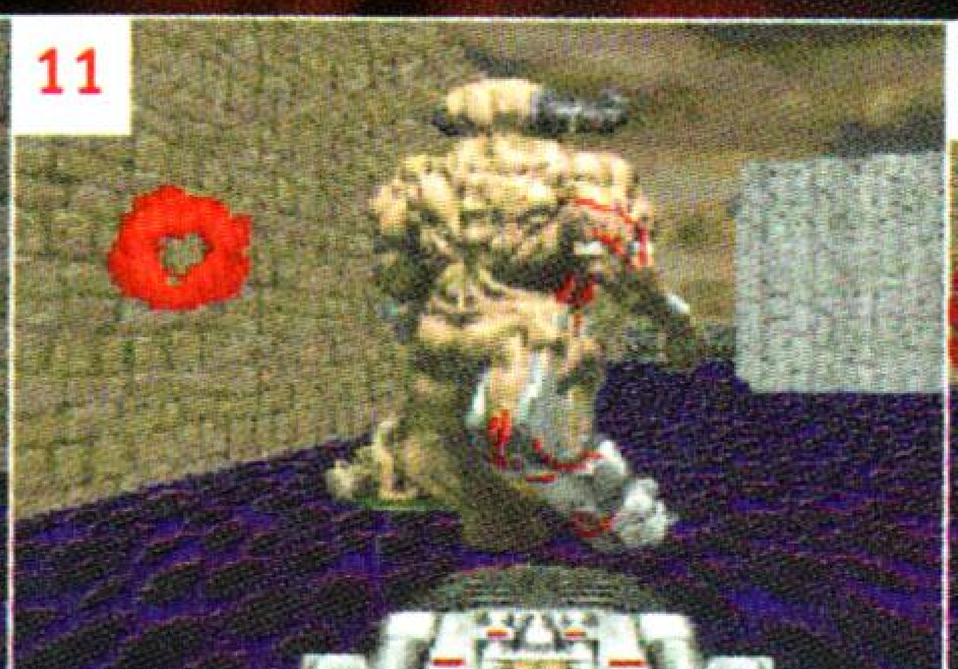
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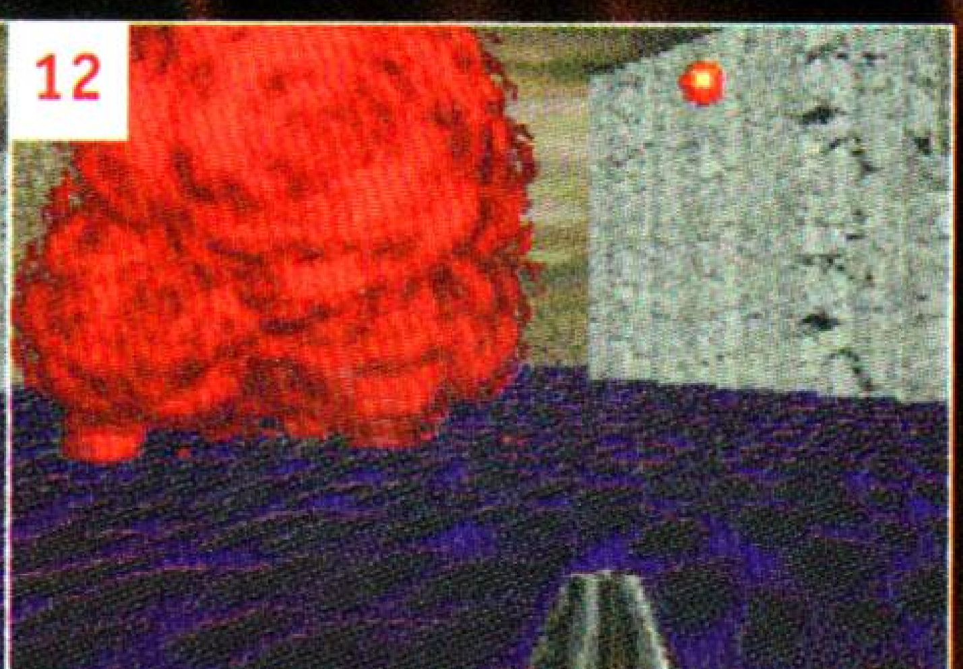
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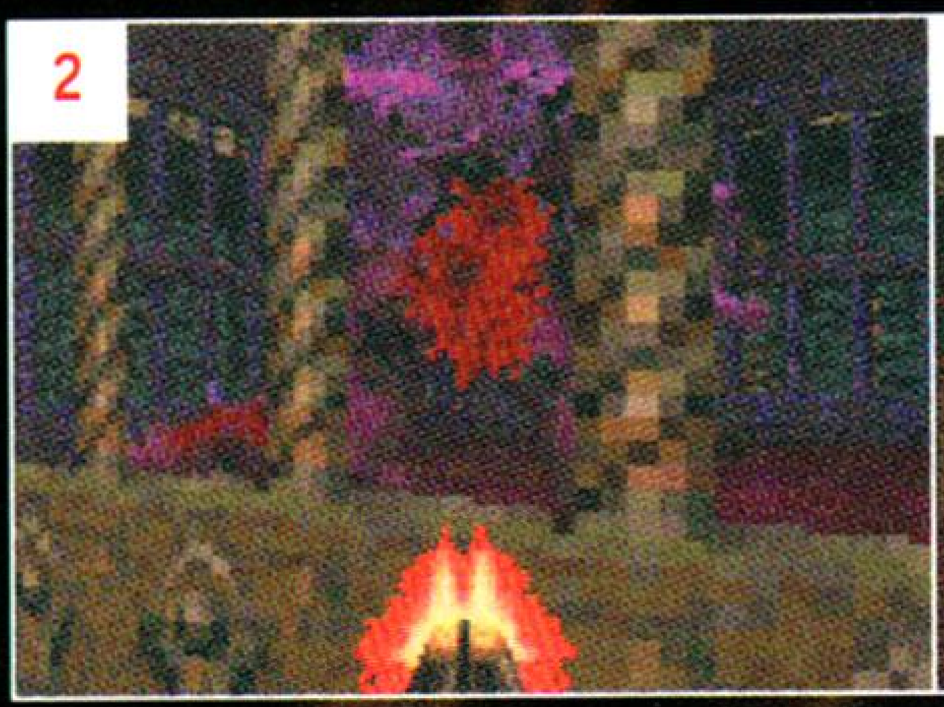
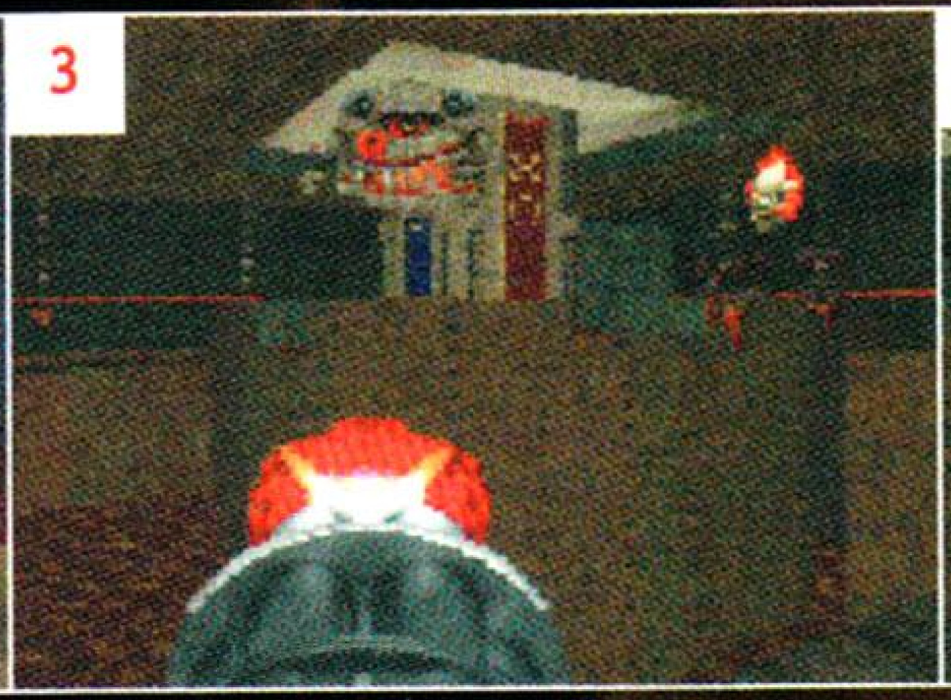
Battle through the catacombs of the ANCIENT HOUSE OF HELL!

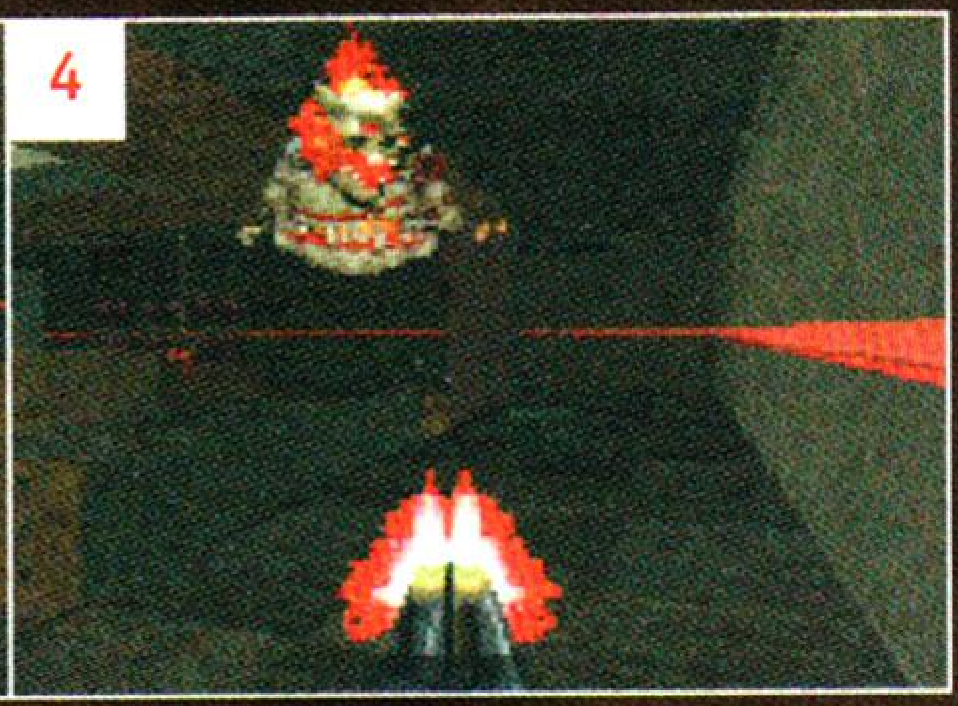
LEVEL 58 - THE MANSION

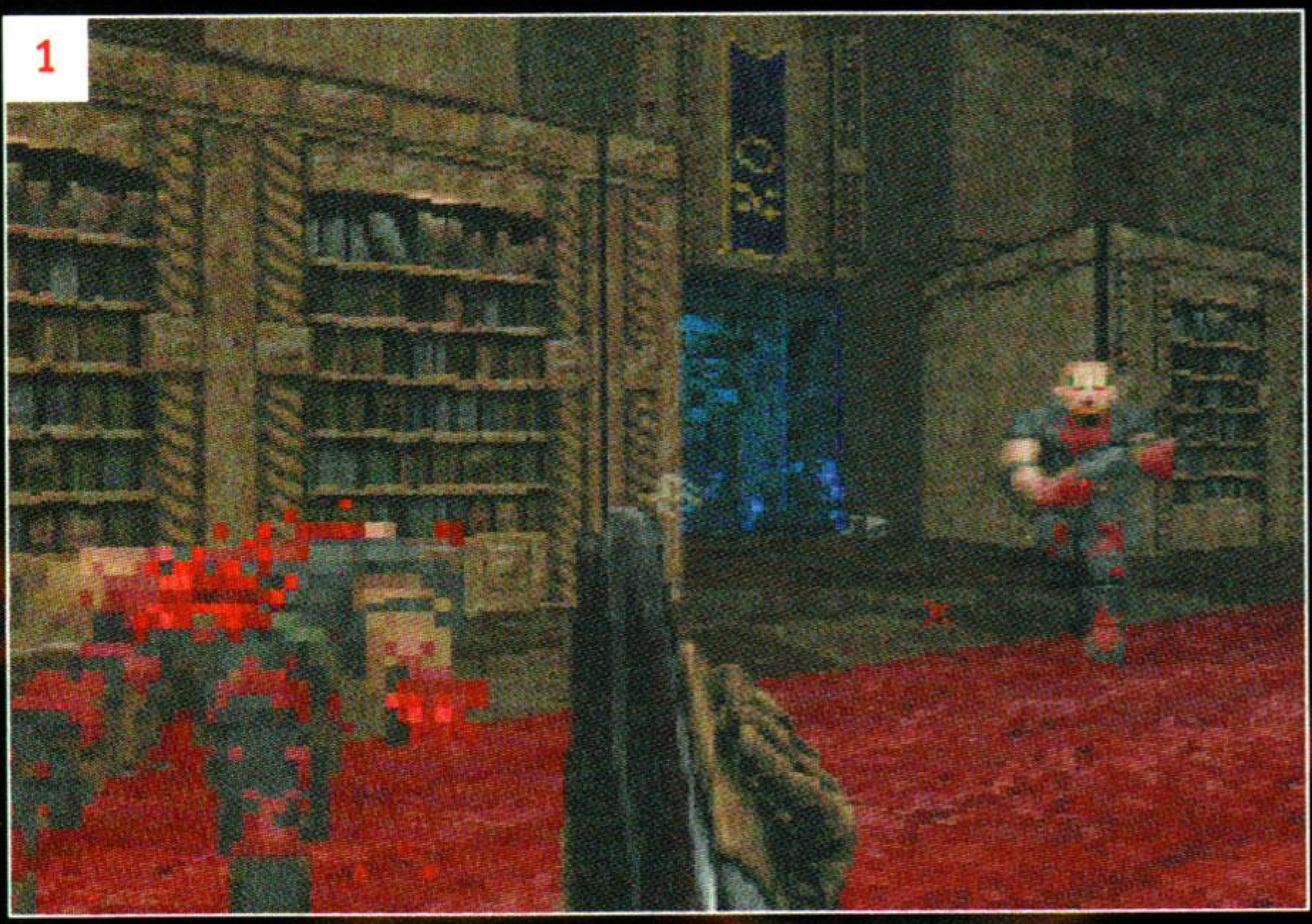
INPUT CODE: XDV29SRKRT

One of the most cunningly designed levels of the entire game, the Mansion features an intriguing gothic interior and a maze of interlocking corridors, packed with a variety of unpleasant adversaries to overcome, and four rising teleports that lead to some particularly dark areas. Crank up the volume and turn out the lights - and you'll know the meaning of the word 'fear'! Also check out the pedestal surrounded by teleports in the outside courtyard; a simple puzzle, but one that shows just how much time has been spent creating this masterpiece of a level.

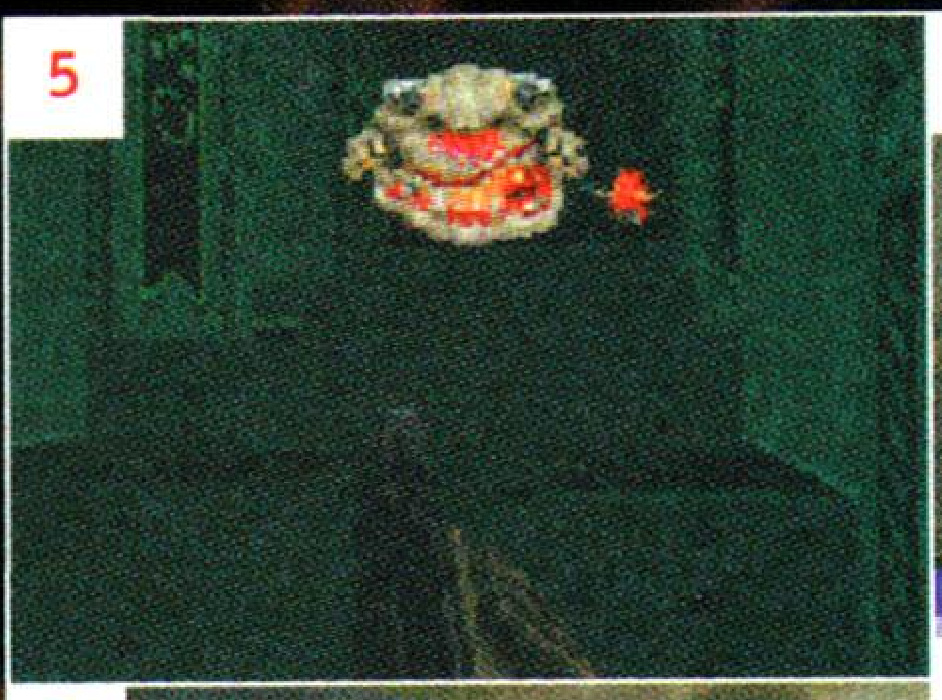


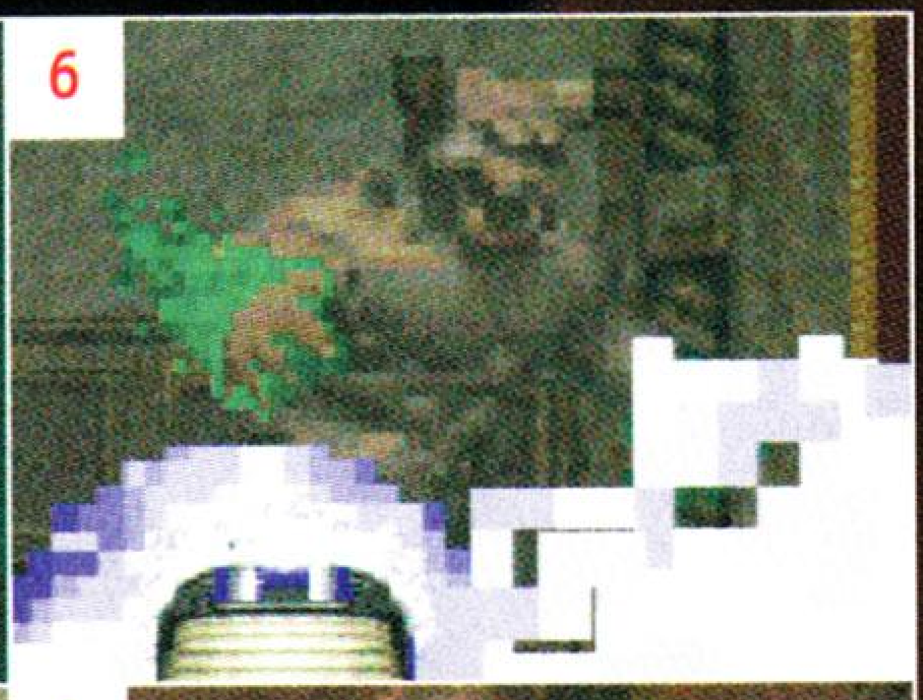


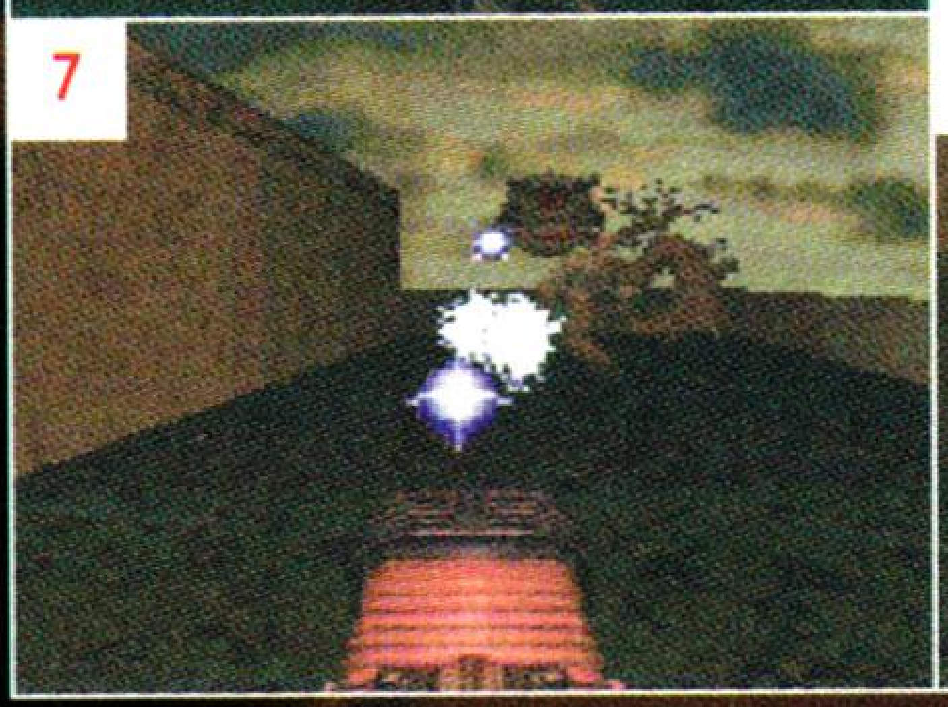


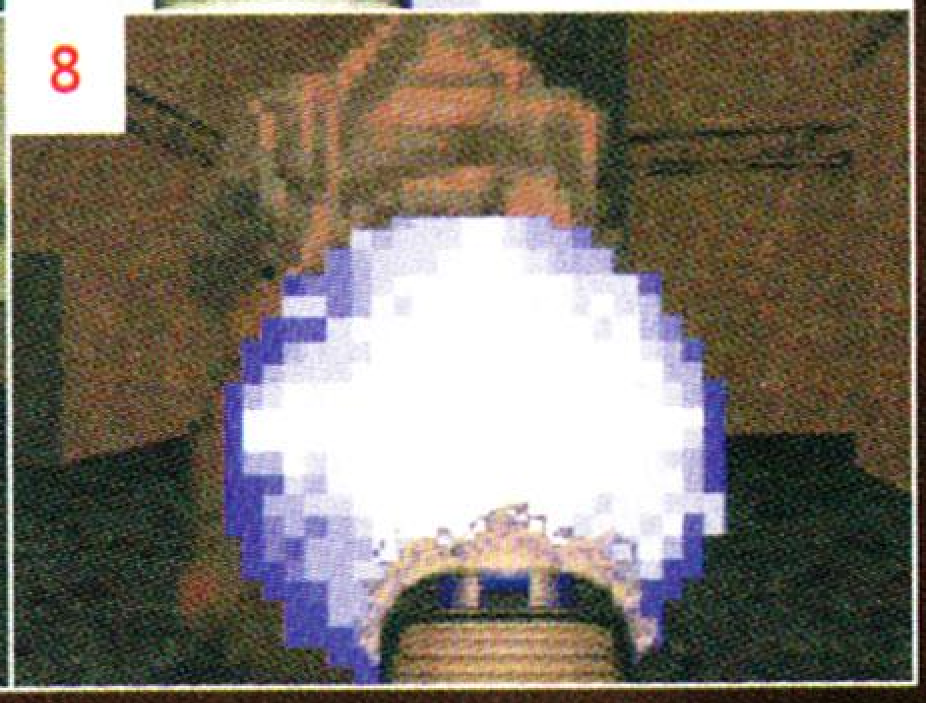


We started our stately home exploration in the library, which rapidly turned into a mortuary instead (picture 1). Then we entered a door on the upper floor, and came across some Barons bathed in a purple light (picture 2). Then we entered the chamber that is central to your continued success on this level (pictures 3 to 5). Blast that Pain Elemental before he spews out more Lost Souls!









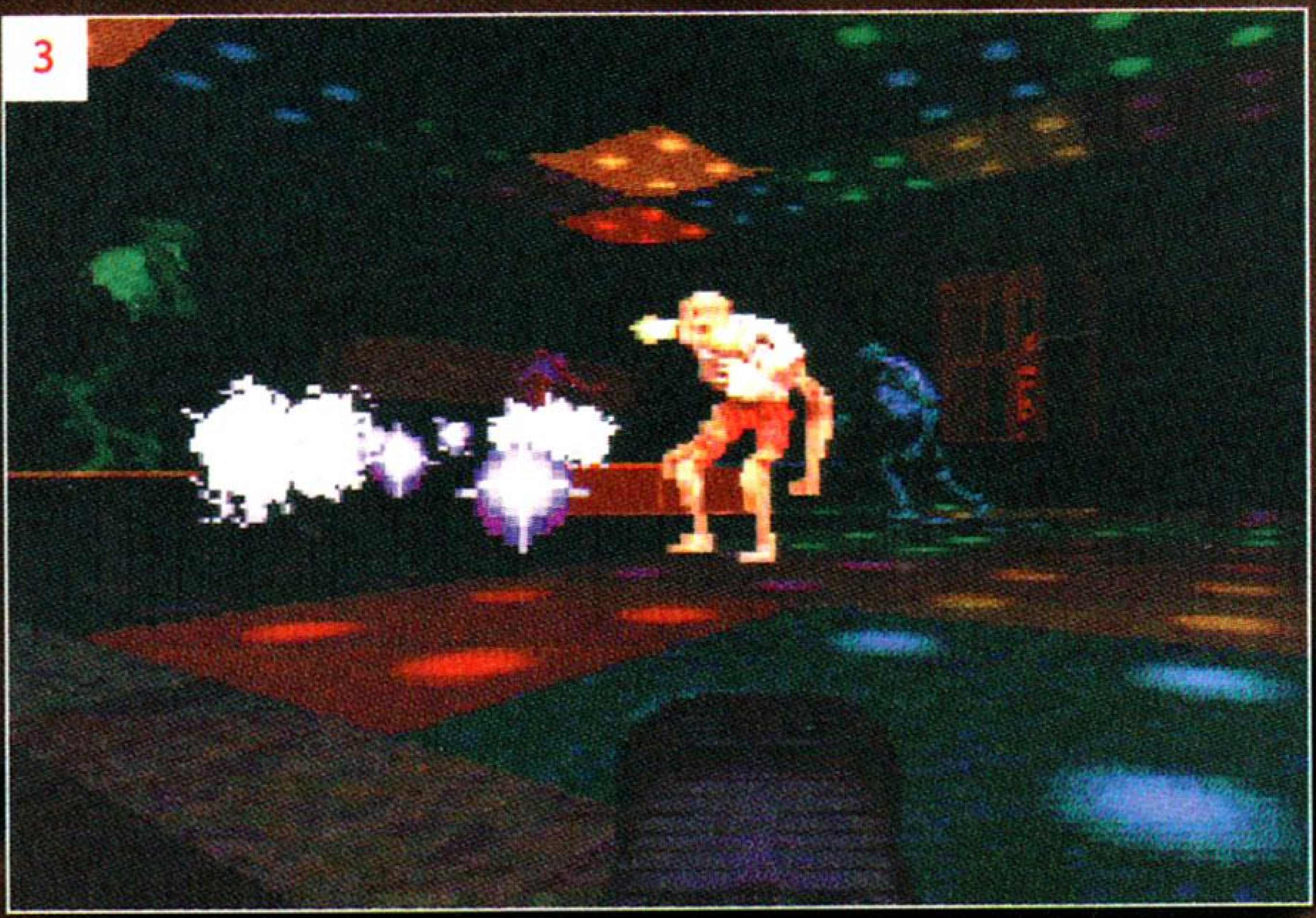
We entered the maze of interlocking corridors with a possessed glee. This section is full of horrors lurking around every corner (picture 6) before the final outside section is located (pictures 7 and 8). Here is where you'll find a rather special gift left on a pedestal. Can you retrieve it?

Groove on down in THE NIGHTCLUB FROM HADES!

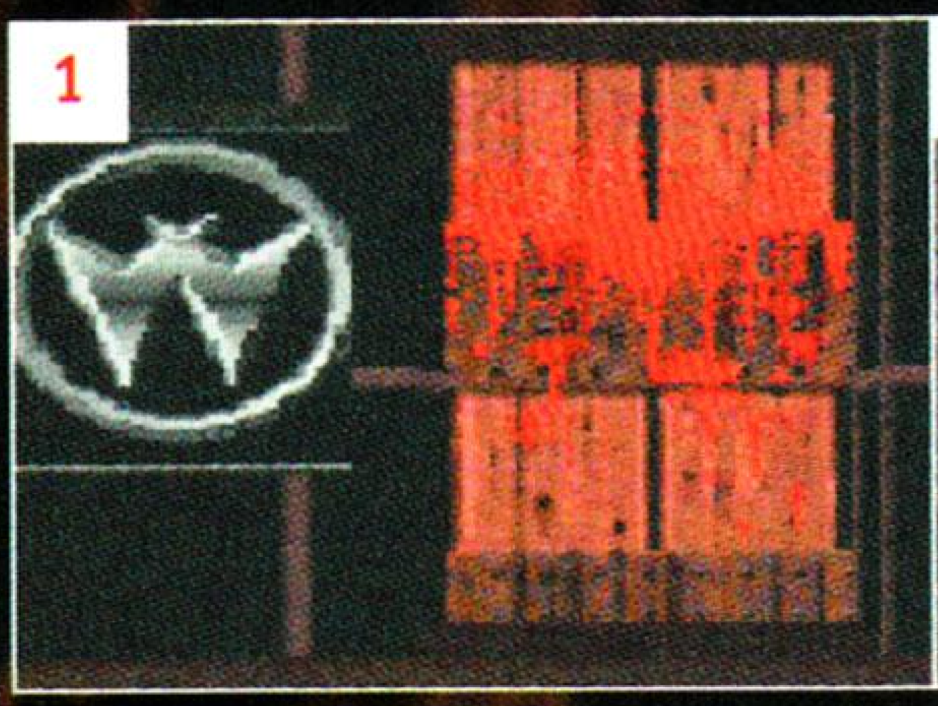
LEVEL 59 - CLUB DOOM!

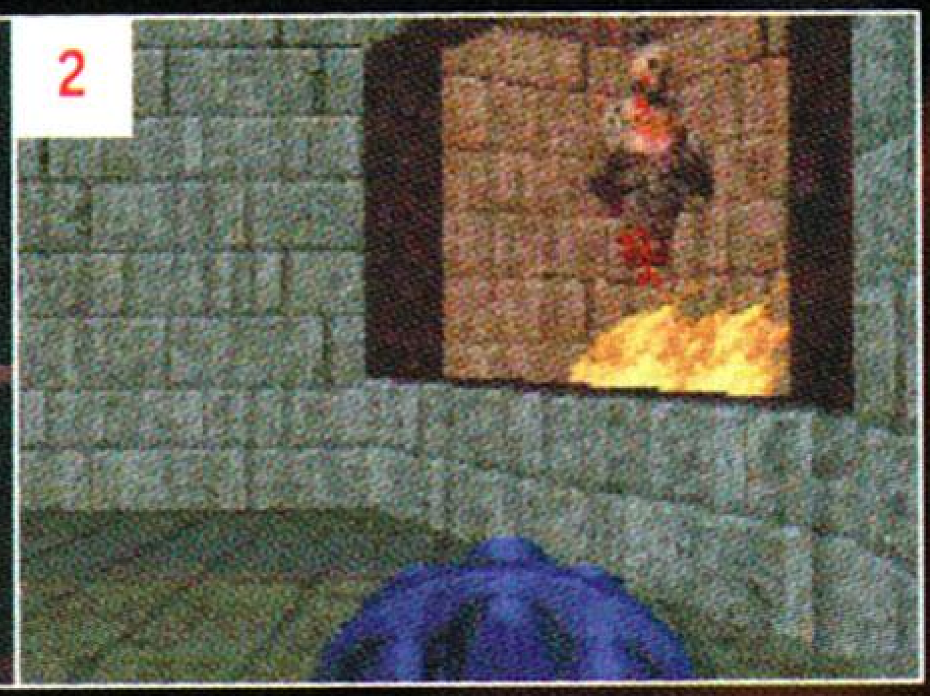
INPUT CODE: 644YL1Q9GJ

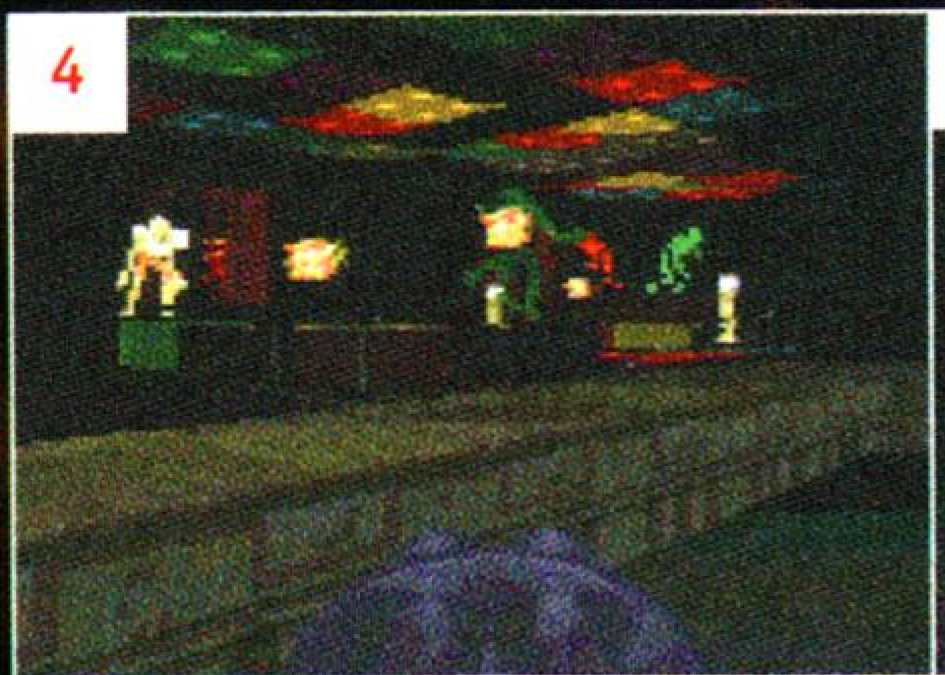
This is the one that Doomsters all over the world had been waiting for; and only features in the PlayStation version. A dark and foreboding corridor leads up some steps, with the surrounding walls glowing with an eerie green mist. Then the hardcore industrial-techno music starts; and you realise that you've unwittingly stumbled into the nightclub from Hell! The music increases in speed and volume, whilst your visor attempts to compensate for the weirdness. Dispatch the grooving Revenants and head for the bar - there's a switch to open a portion of the wall. Run to it and negotiate the transparent flesh walls before exiting.

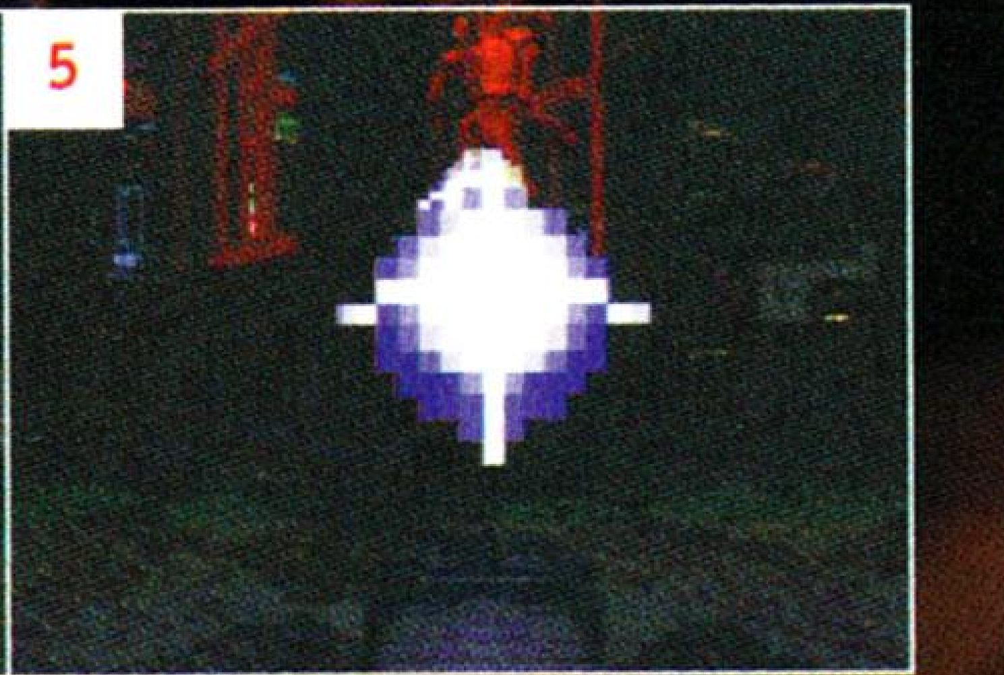


Starting off in the pitched blackness, we headed for the bloodied door next to the advert for Williams Entertainment (picture 1). Up those steps and turn the corner. Say hello to the doorman (picture 2) before entering the groove-house!

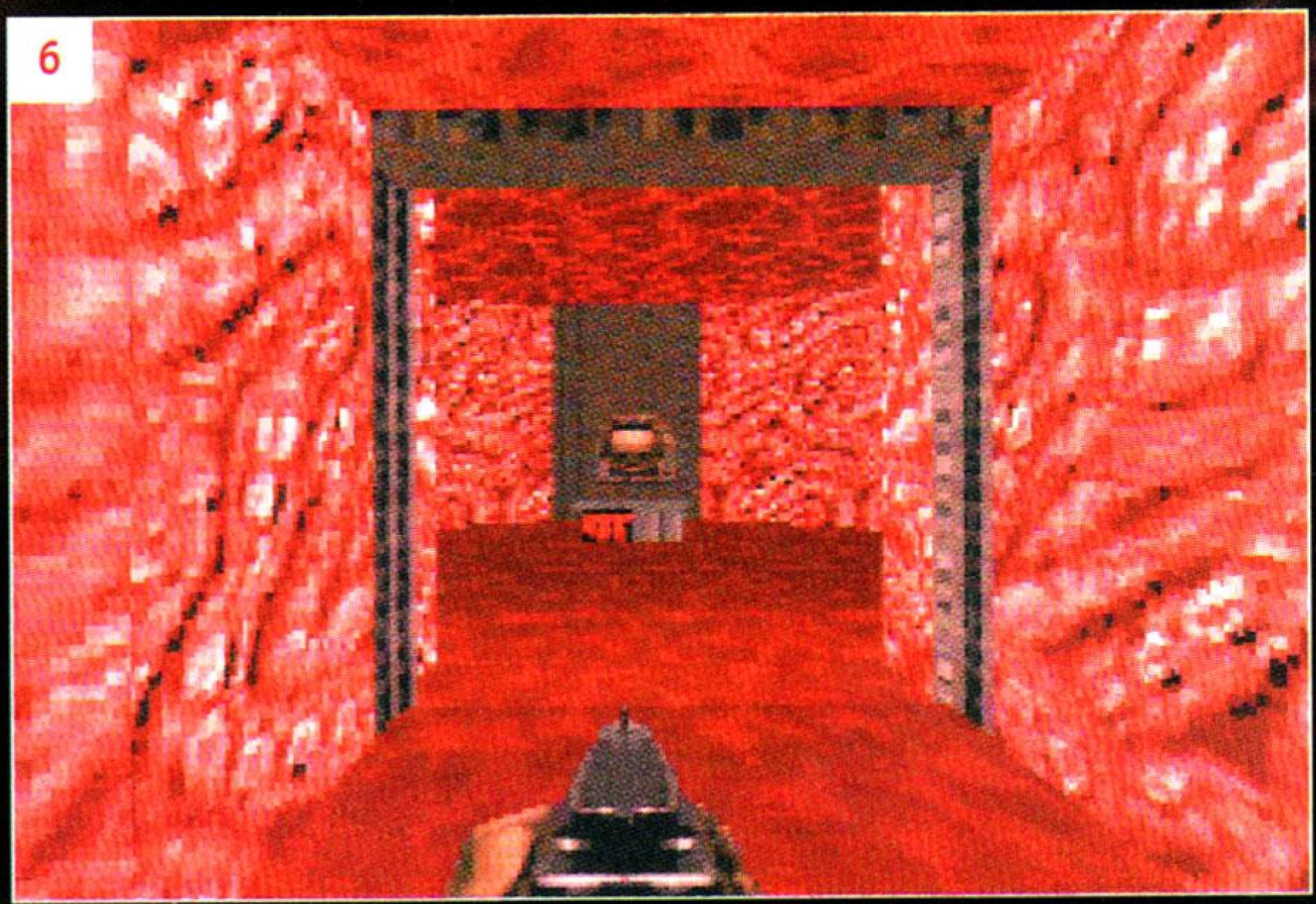








Unfortunately, the Revenants don't seem to be that keen on your particular brand of boogie (pictures 3 to 5). Gun them all down in a blasting frenzy and watch for those homing missiles. Find the switch at the bar and run to the open door. Then locate the exit in the pulsing flesh room of terror (picture 6)!



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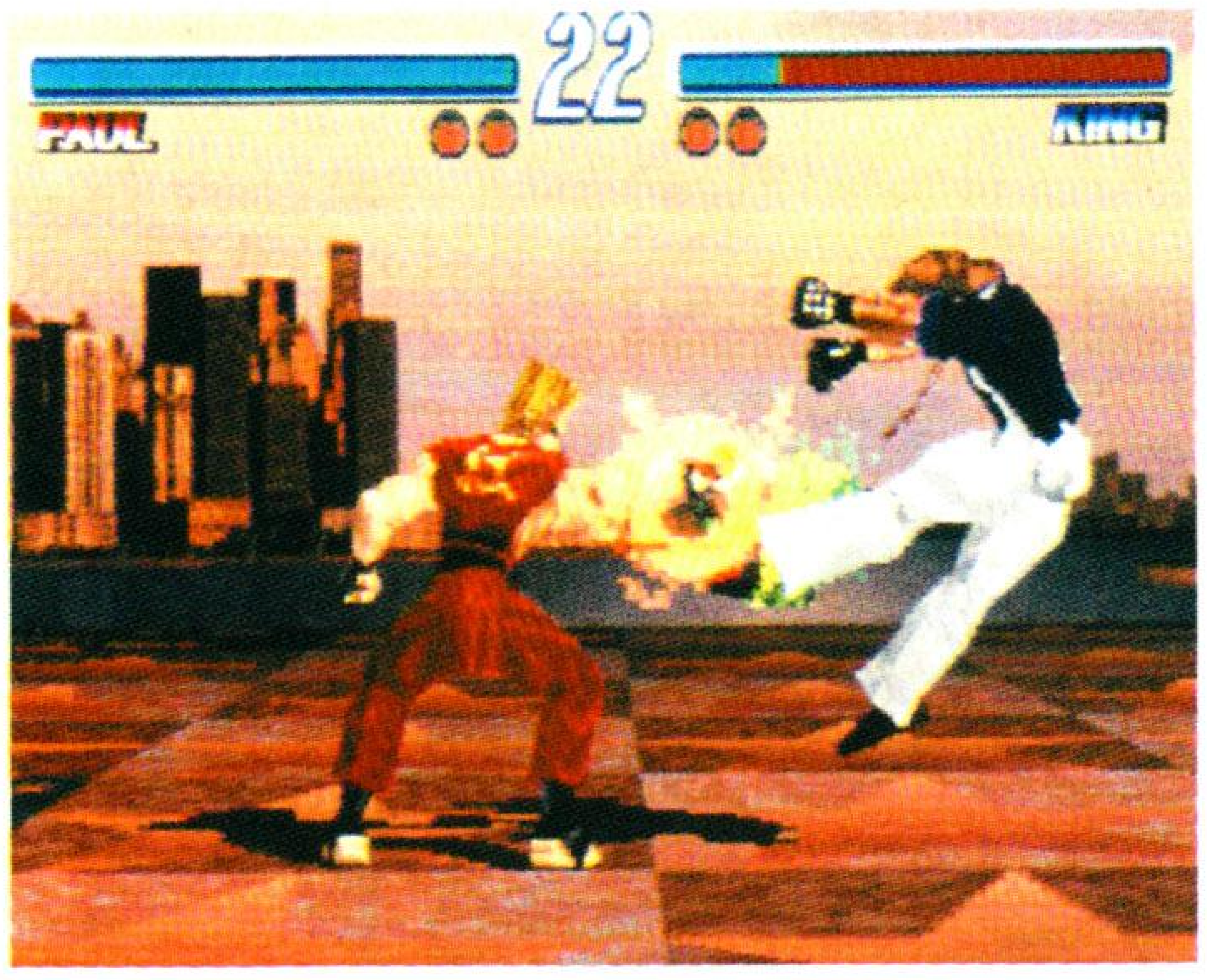
MAXIMUM

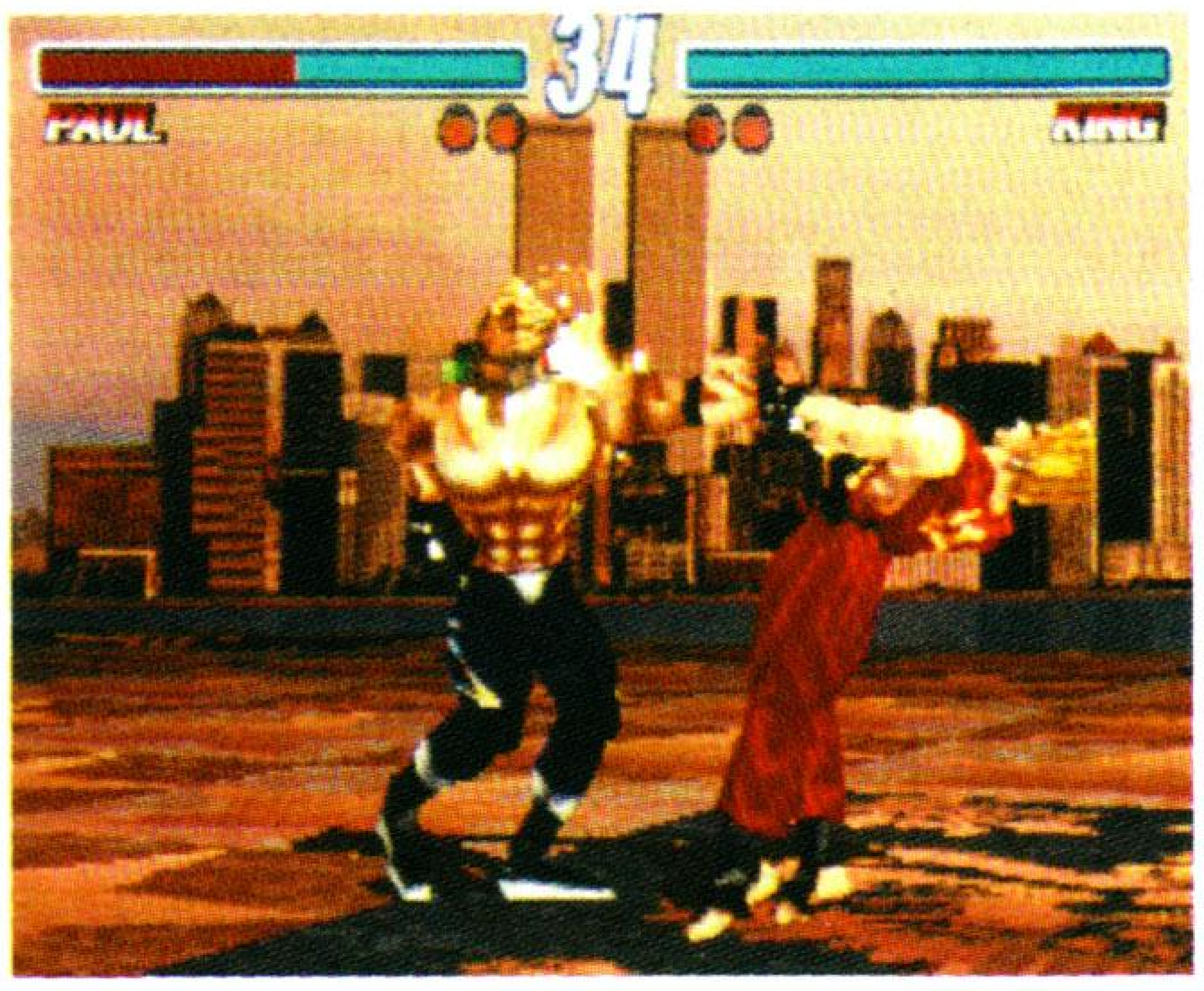
THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE VIDEO GAME WORLD

The rave warriors return in TEKKEN 2! Details on Namco's latest PlayStation epic!

The first screenshots from Namco's forthcoming Tekken 2 conversion have been released after months of waiting and speculation. Excited PlayStation owners have been quivering with anticipation since the coin-op version hit arcades in August 1995, and all eyes turned to Namco as the gaming world hoped for a quality port-over. As you can tell almost immediately, it would seem that the Japanese developers responsible have more than excelled themselves on this occasion, and appear to have delivered a carbon-copy of a hugely successful coin-op in record time.

PS
NAMCO
THE IRON FIST IS BACK!
TEKKEN 2
RELEASED IN **JAPAN ON MARCH 29th**



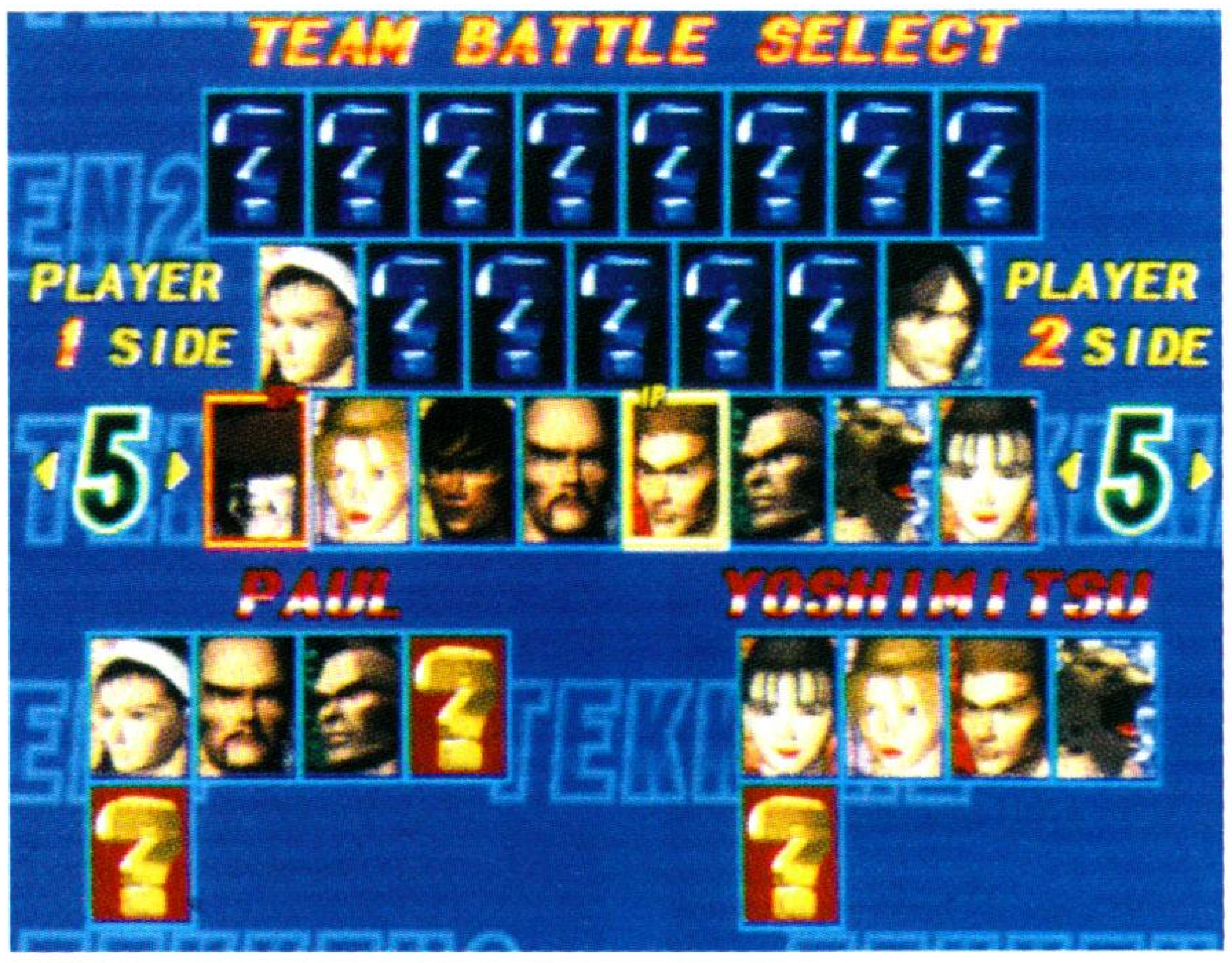


Just how close to the original is this PlayStation version? As many hardcore gamers know, the conversion of the first Tekken game was almost arcade perfect, but suffered from slightly blockier floor tiles and smoke effects. From the liberal smattering of screenshots (including some that you'll find nowhere else), you can tell that the PlayStation equivalent of Tekken 2 appears to be pretty much identical to the coin-op, which is no mean feat. We've compared the two sets of screenshots, and it is impossible to distinguish between the two versions at this stage, and this is the most promising indication of an arcade-perfect translation.

Another fear expressed by expectant PlayStation owners was that the light-sourcing would be missing. But fear not, perfection fans, as Heihachi's dojo never looked so good! Lei Wulong's rooftop fighting arena also benefits from this advanced lighting technique whilst Yoshimitsu's forest hideaway looks as breathtaking as it did in the coin-op. Staying with graphical splendour, it must be stated that the backgrounds have been ported-over lock stock and barrel without any loss in detail, but as the backdrops are simple scaling layers of parallax scrolling, we expected no less. The only main problem envisaged concerns loading times, and as yet we have no news regarding this matter. The first Tekken loaded extremely quickly (after the somewhat novel initial delay where players enjoyed a quick game of Galaga), and there is no reason to expect anything less the second time around.

TAKE THAT, BEAST PRIEST!
Paul Phoenix provides a portion of punishment to a stunned King. Look closely at the explosion and the floor tiles, and you'll see just how perfect this conversion is!

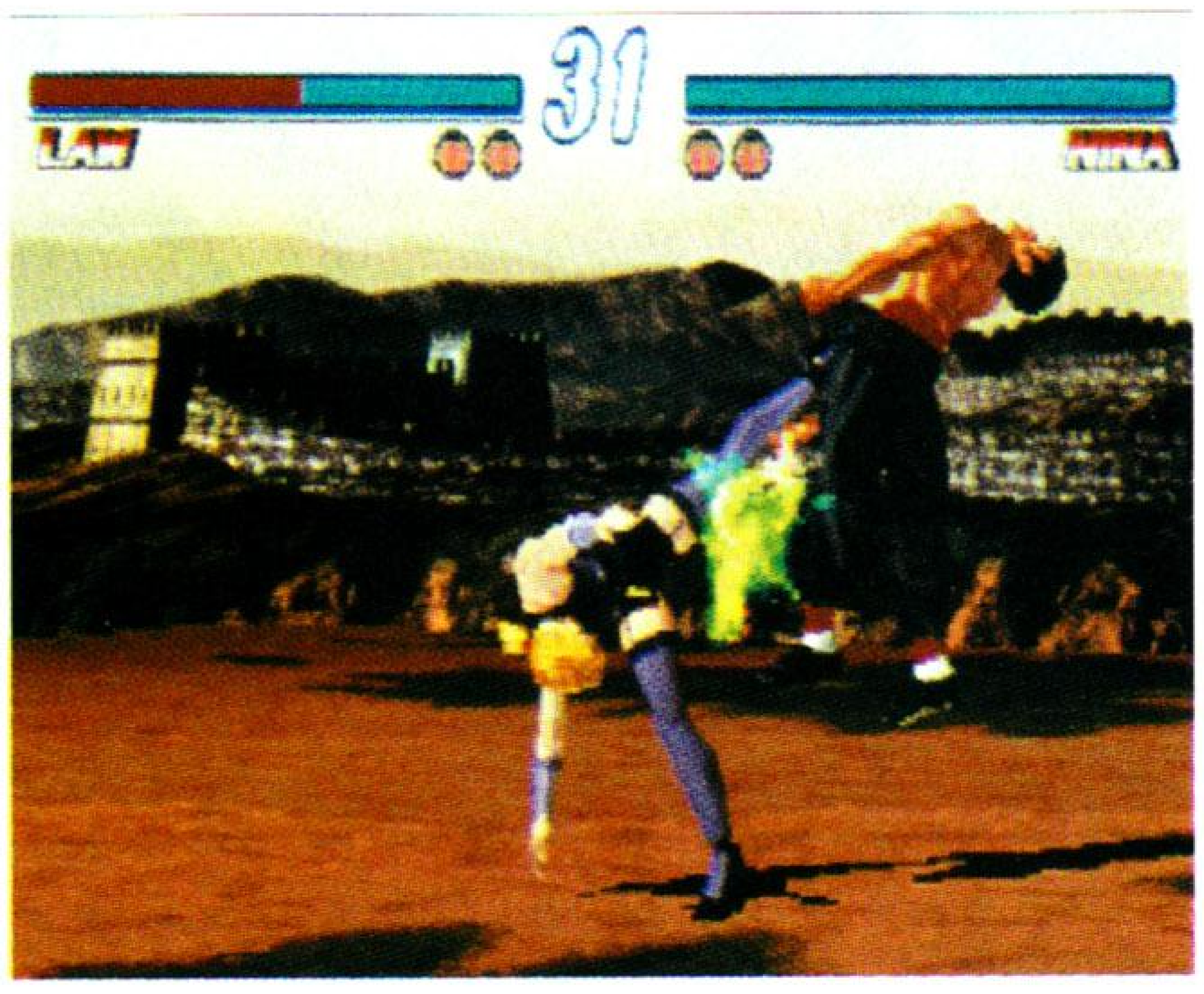
The biggest PlayStation release of the year looks to be arcade-perfect! Namco demonstrate their prowess once more by delivering another gaming masterpiece!

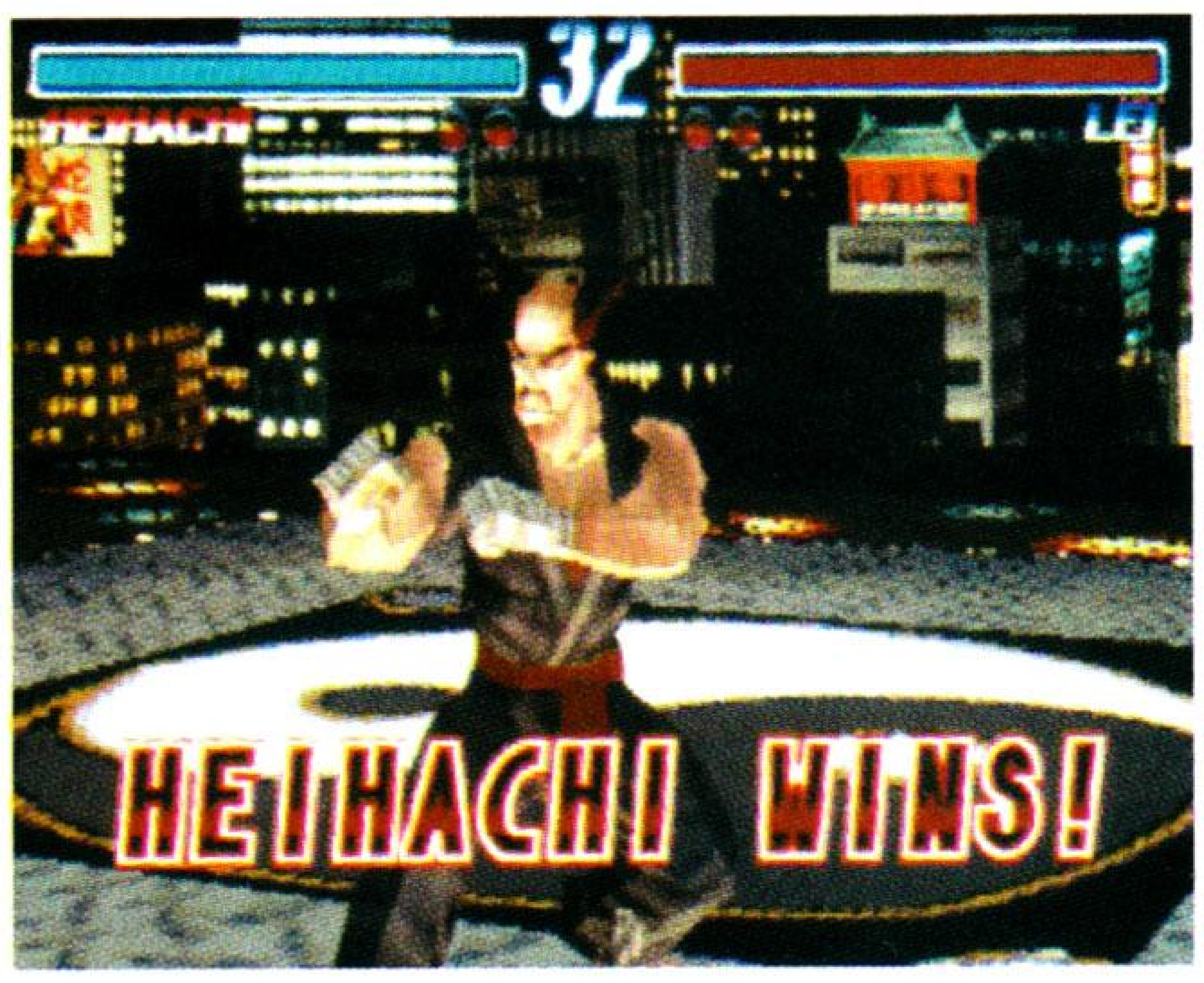


Moving onto actual PlayStation enhancements of the arcade version, **MAXIMUM** reckons that the growling Heihachi opening rendered movie will be complemented by an all-new PlayStation-only affair that should be as absolutely stunning as the Tekken introduction. Remember how far your jaw dropped when you first saw the opening scene of Yoshimitsu slicing bamboo? Well prepare for a huge opening rendered animation that even kicks that into touch. As well as the original movie introduction, the PlayStation version will definitely have rendered character endings (unlike the commercial arcade version that rewarded players with a simple run through of each victory) for each of the ten initially selectable characters. Did we also hear rumour that all the middle bosses would also benefit from such an ending (after becoming selectable)? We certainly did, and we're looking forward to finding whether this is the case. Just try to imagine those 23 different endings!

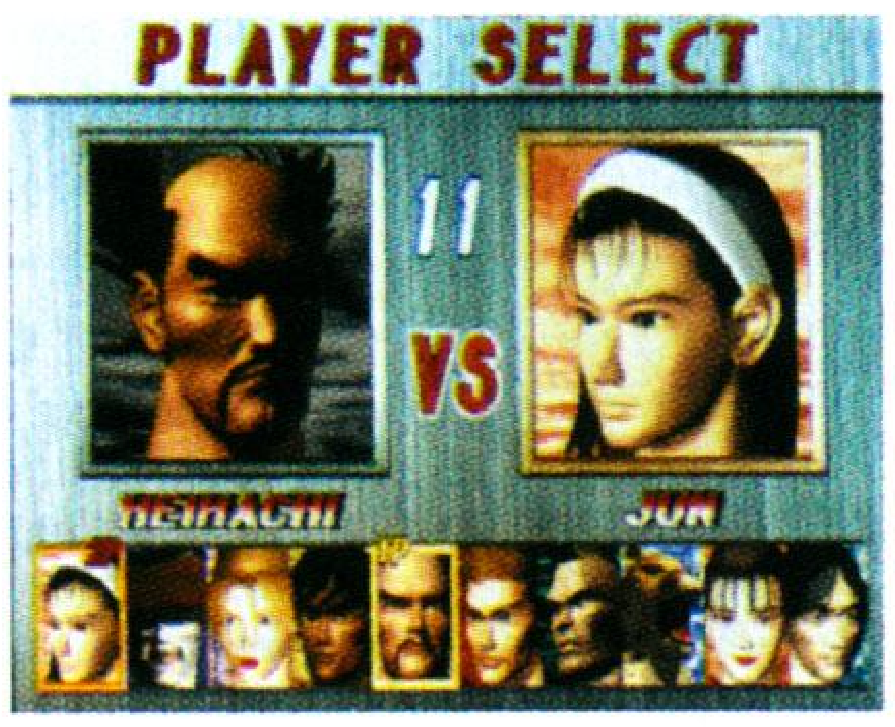
The excitement doesn't end there, either. As you may already have fathomed, the PlayStation version has an all-new Team Battle Mode. But this isn't just any old multi-player fight fest; as a choice of 23 characters may eventually be chosen in a battle fest of truly epic proportions. PlayStation Tekken 2 now pits up to eight different fighters per side in a free-for-all stomping maul for the attention of Kazuya himself. Choose to fight against either another player or computer-controlled teams, and try your hand at learning new character techniques, or simply show off your legendary multi-faceted Tekken 2 character skill.

Another brand new feature is the practice mode, where initiates in the school of the Iron Fist try their skills on an unguarded (but invincible) opponent. Perfect for beginners who wish gain skill without being flattened by an all-powerful computer foe, this mode also benefits the more

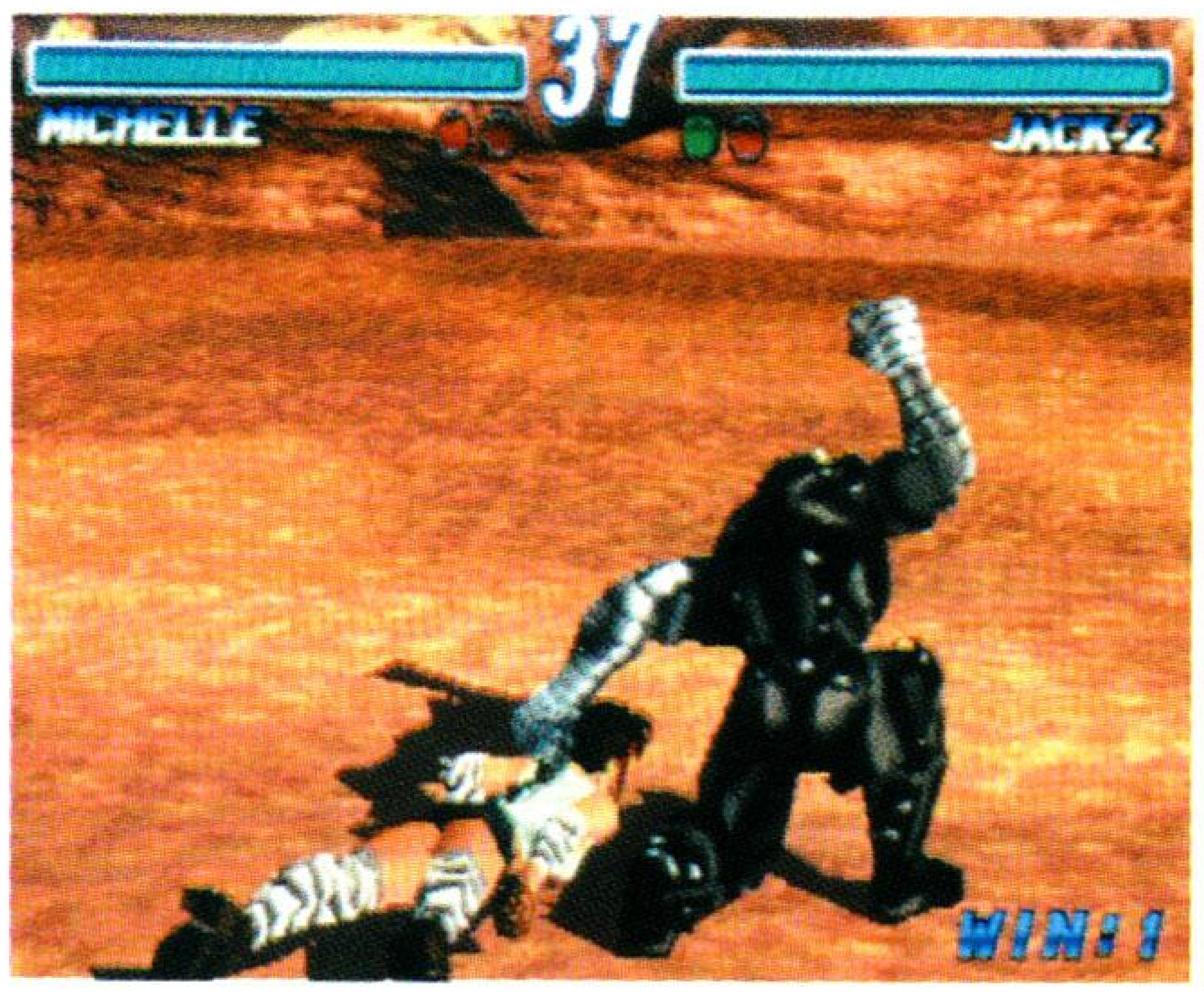


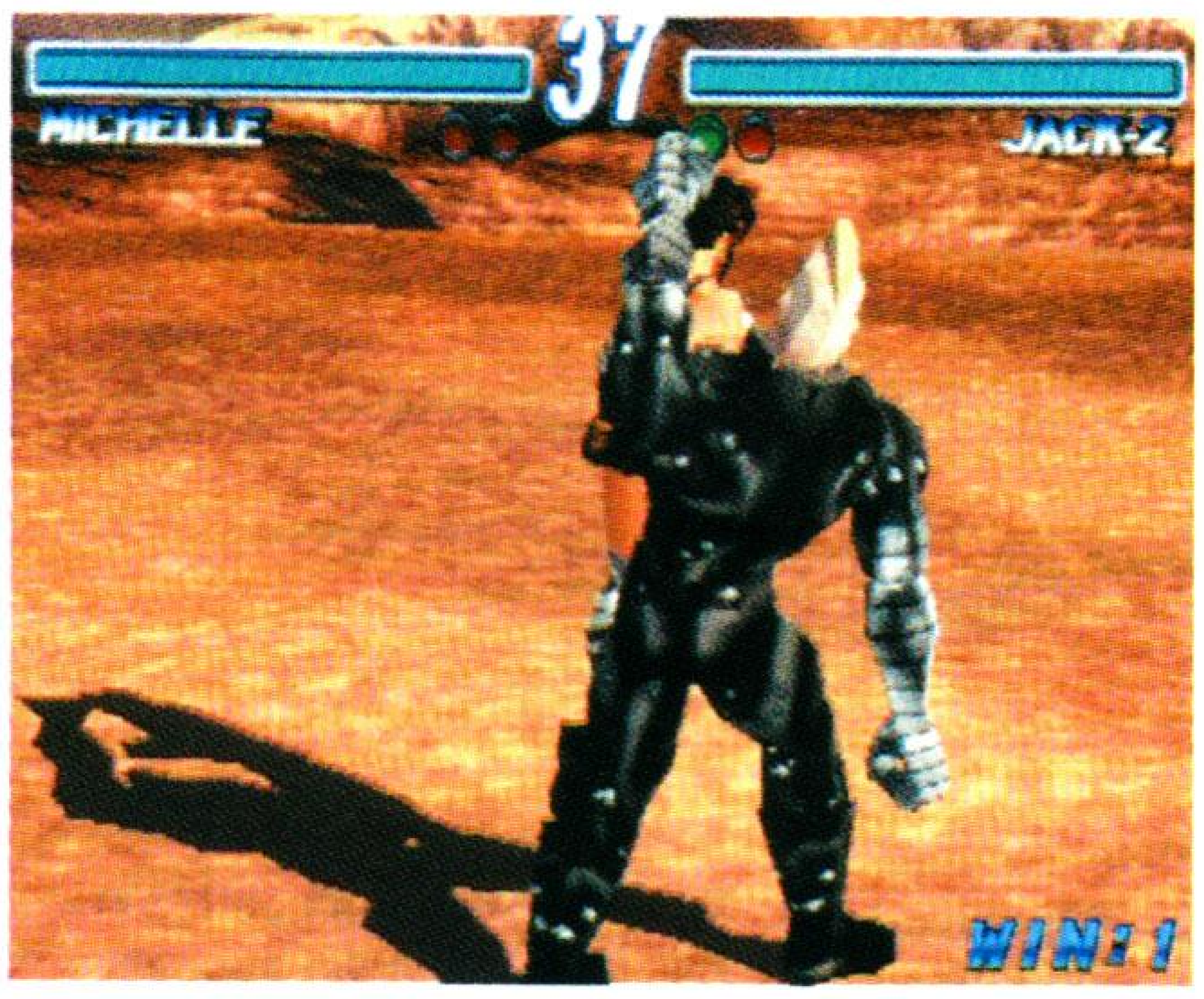


MULTI-PLAYER MADNESS!
Namco seem to be striving for an arcade conversion that actually betters the coin-op original with a number of extra features. Most exciting of the lot is the stunning team battle mode, where up to 23 characters may be employed in fisticuff action! And everything can be saved to memory card!



23 of the world's greatest warriors are brought together for the second Iron Fist tournament!

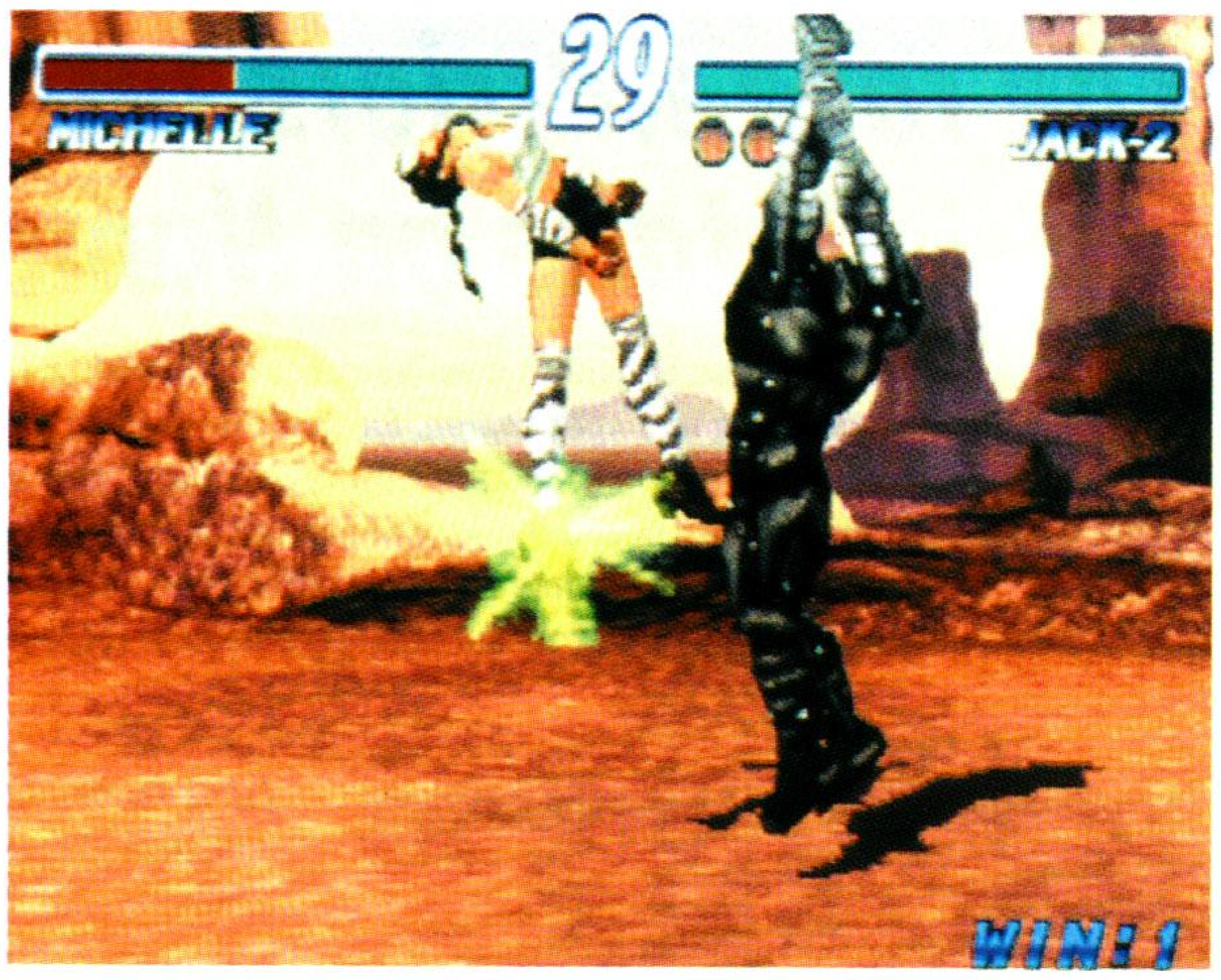




JACK 2 ENGAGES MAULING MODE!
Tekken 2 benefits from a host of new moves and a costume change for the original characters, as Jack 2 demonstrates with a Catapult through Hell.

advanced player who can try out a ten-hit combo or two. The computer player always rises after a knockdown, and other unconfirmed settings may be tweaked in the most user-friendly game ever seen.

Players wishing to rack up a large collection of fruit next to their unstoppable character should be happy to hear that the Versus Mode has survived intact, and this can also be redefined. Challenge your friend to a spot of one-on-one fisticuffs, whilst tweaking the round time, number of wins needed, and strength of connecting blows. In the upgrade to Tekken 2, the existing characters have received a large selection of new and killer techniques, whilst fresh and exciting combatants have appeared to challenge the deadly Kazuya. In Versus Mode, there should be a final choice of 23 characters (after the usual middle bosses have been dispatched), plus other super secret characters that some of you may already know about. Also check the screenshots and you'll see that PlayStation Tekken 2 is Version B of the arcade game (and we're not sure if the A version can be selected, as there's no real point). How can we tell? Well, the round victory indicators are coloured green after a bout win, and not red as they were in Version A.

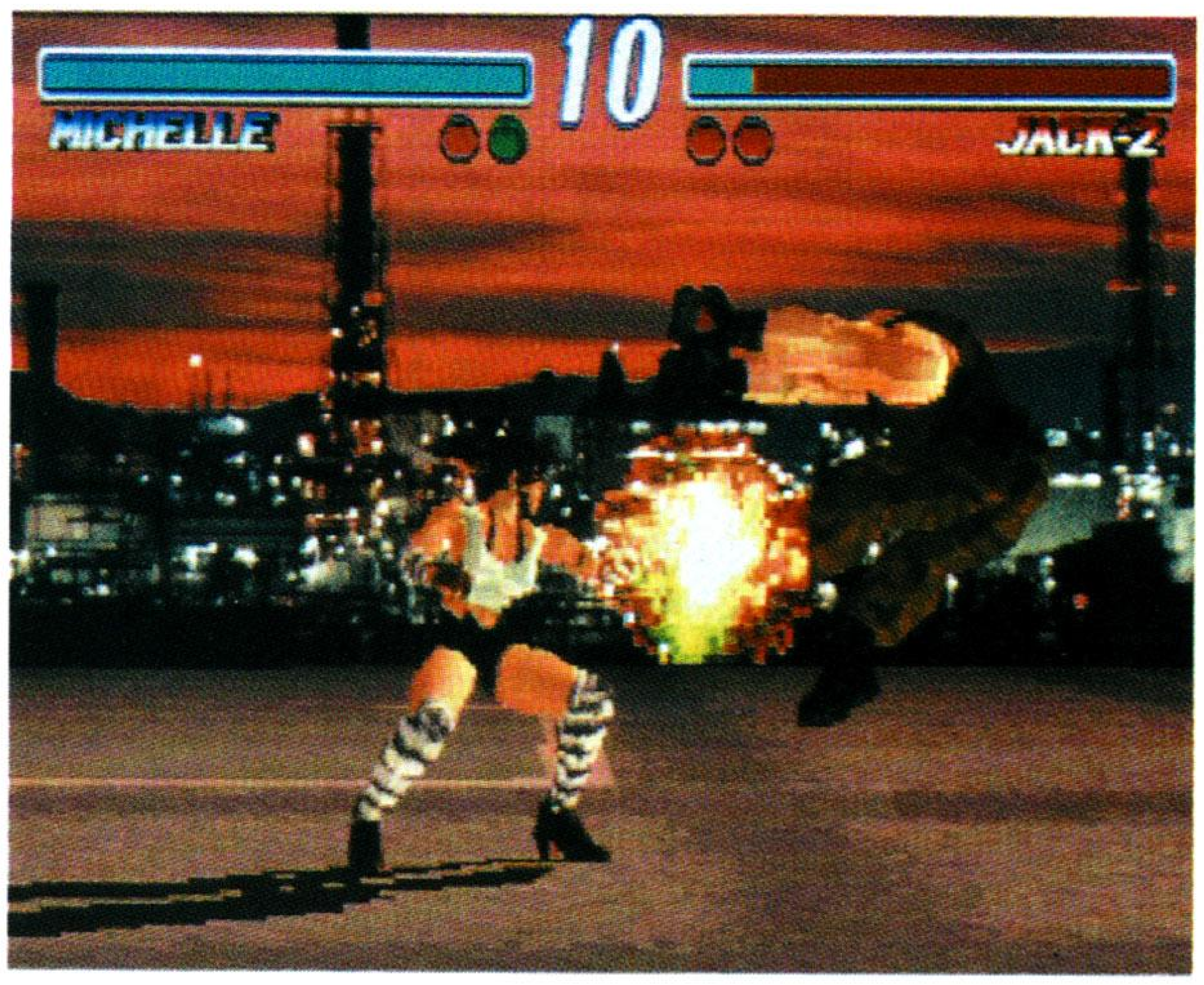


Moving onto the contestants of the second Rave War themselves, those familiar with Tekken characters should find an recognisable face or two to face off against. All of the characters (including the sex-changing and rather inept Kunimitsu) benefit from new techniques, whilst their older moves have variations to them with changes in force and speed. Of the new techniques, some take the form of new combos, whilst the two (or more) ultimate 10-hit monster hit combination attacks that the character possesses can be varied mid-way through for some cunning advanced techniques and greater freedom.

Other more superficial changes are also present and add an even greater sense of realism and professionalism to an already outstanding product. Of the old characters, all have received a highly detailed face-lift and now look more angular and unique, whilst many have benefited from at least one costume change. Yoshimitsu now looks a lot more like the leader of a posse of ninja bandits with his hat and shiny armour, whilst Nina Williams has shed even more clothing for some bizarre reason. We also remarked on how natty Kazuya looked in his purple suit (before he pummelled us into the ground, that is).

Old favourites and newcomers combine to overcome Kazuya! There's a new king of the Rave War, and he's looking to crush all challenges!

In order to whip you up into a Tekken 2 frenzy of excitement, **MAXIMUM** has decided to briefly detail three of the many newcomers to the world of Tekken 2. All three will feature extensively in a rather special Extended Play next issue (turn to the back page for more information!) and add a novel twist to fighting with their different styles. To whet your appetite, here's a small potted history for you to pour over...



CHINESE COP FRENZY!
Lei Wulong works up to his confrontation with Bruce with the demolishing of Yoshimitsu (right). Note that this Tekken 2 Ver. B, as Michelle's victory indicator shows.

NAMCO STORIES

Recent Namco coin-op releases have seem to have set the standard for future video gaming both in the arcade and at home. The company has a very strong selection of stunning titles and is gearing up for an arcade invasion across the UK. The current schedule of arcade games on offer (in Japan and at selected arcades in throughout the UK) reflects this strong commitment towards quality software, and with this in mind, the **MAXIMUM** team decided to play through Namco's forthcoming attractions, all of which took main stage at the recent ATEI show in London.

TIME CRISIS

A nod to Virtua Cop, although the Namco offering attempts something new by adding a 'ducking pedal' to allow the hero to dive out of the way of oncoming bullets. The levels themselves are well-designed, and feature a plethora of special effects, and the polygon enemies look moderately fierce. We didn't really find much to get excited about as the game's main addition (the pedal) proves to be more of a hindrance than an asset. The continued ducking keeps you out of the action for extended periods of time, meaning that half the game time is spent gazing at close range polygon box. Entertaining, but not really polished enough to go head-to-head with Virtua Cop 2.

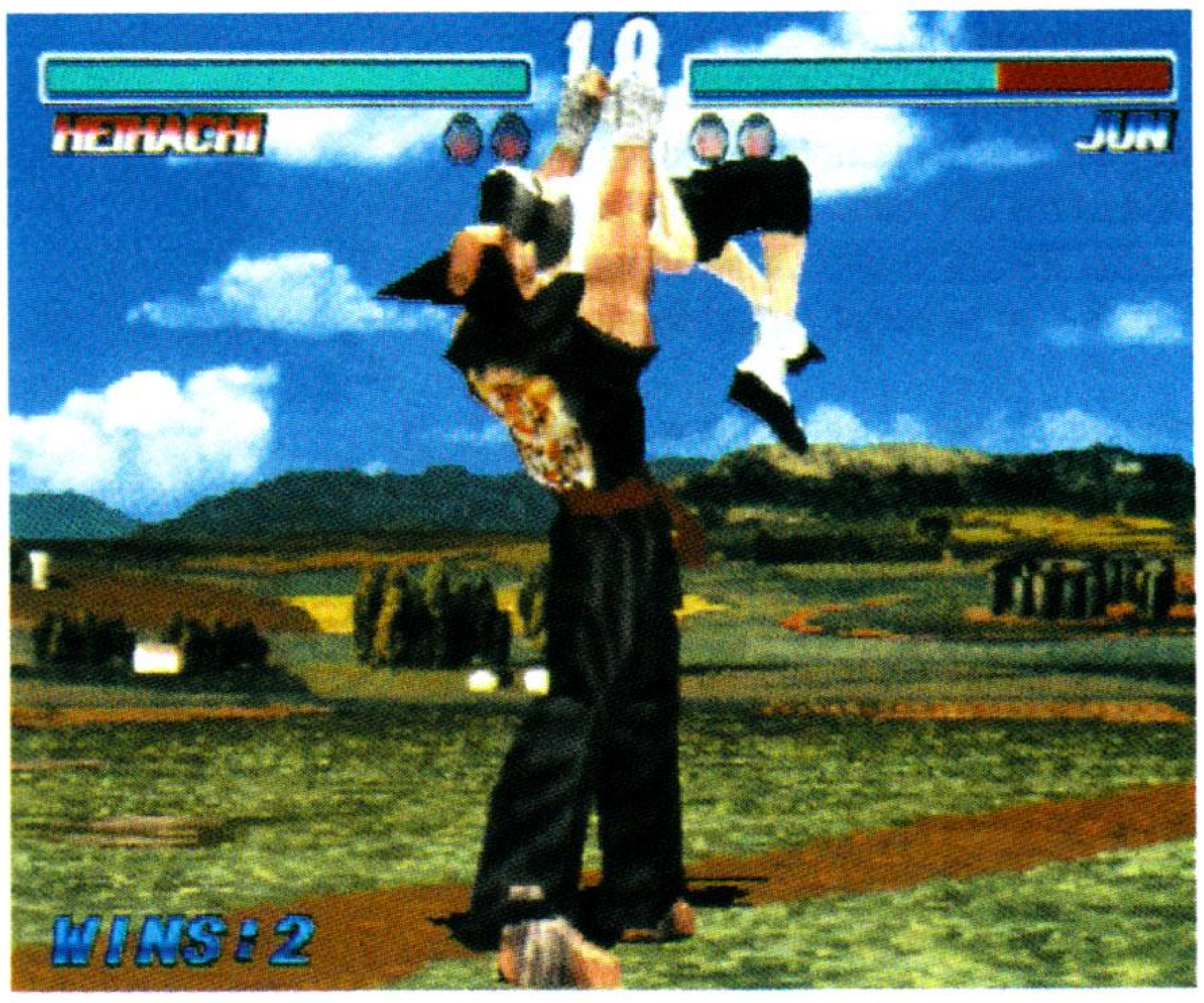
DIRT DASH

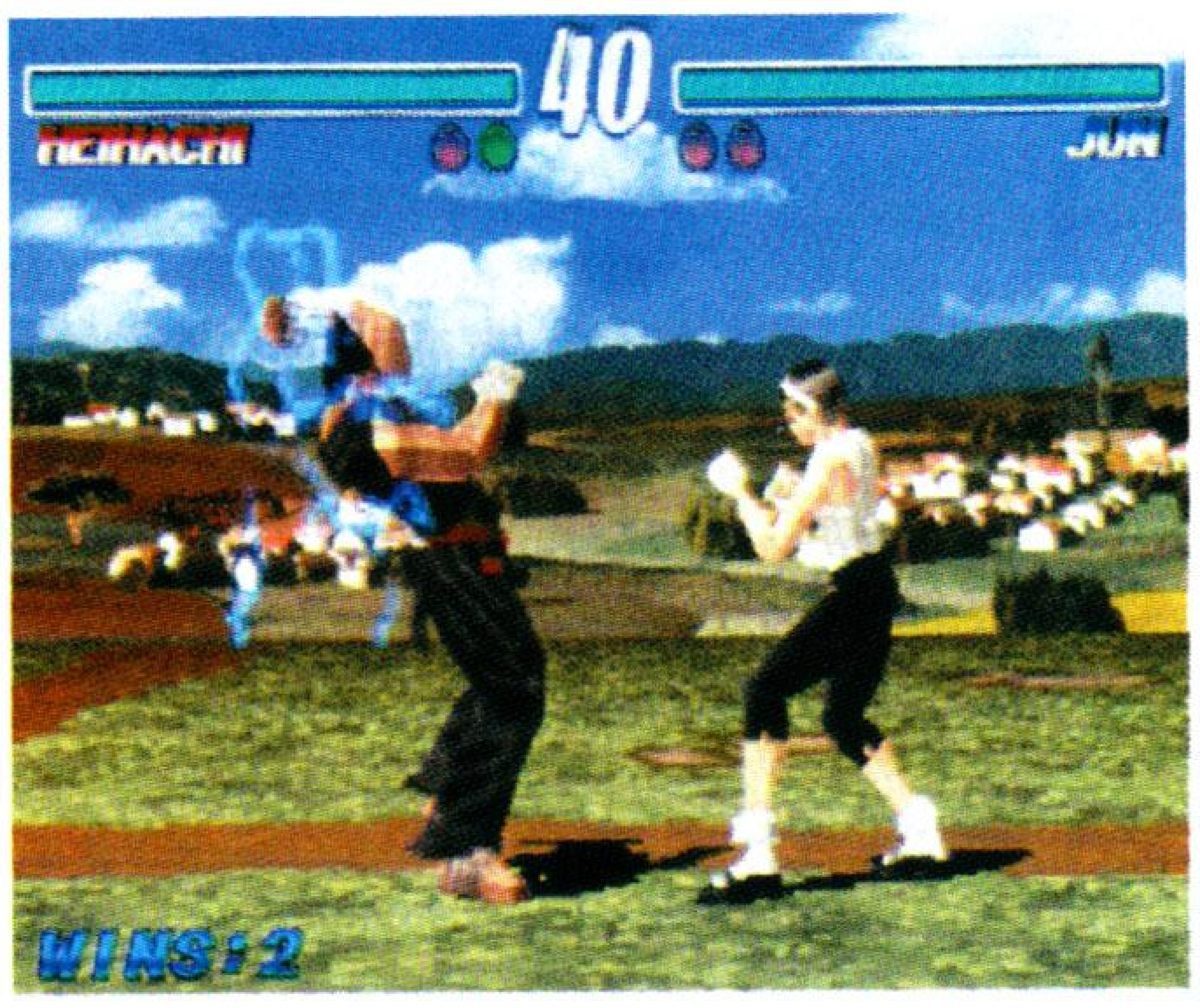
The two newest titles from Namco (apart from the previously detailed Soul Edge) debuted at the ATEI, and were greeted with waves of enthusiasm from the assembled crowds. The weaker of the two titles is the Namco equivalent of Sega Rally. The player is greeted with a choice of three off-road vehicles and a number of different zones to drive through (such as the city or jungle). The different areas of the rally instantly reminds one of Out Run, and after the starting stages, the medium and advanced levels become increasingly more difficult. The graphics were excellent, but only became spectacular in the mountain range stage, where undulating road surfaces and falling rocks conspired to make our travels somewhat rocky. Our reservations in the game were mainly concerned

Three new and mysterious fighters have arrived!

The first of our new tournament contestants is Jun Kazama, the 'Nature Fighter'. As detailed in **MAXIMUM** issue #3, she uses the Kazama school of martial arts passed down through her ancestors to floor her foes. She values her family without question to such an extent that she contacts her spirit of her dead father, and has the gift of extra-sensory perception. She has entered the tournament to stop Kazuya from smuggling live animals, and she works for the WWWF (an anti-smuggling organisation) as a covert operator. Once she faces Kazuya, she hopes to free him from the constraints that are responsible for his behaviour.

HEIHACHI OVERLOAD!
The lightning fist of Heihachi spells the immediate destruction of Jun (below). Also note the new levels of detail on the backdrops.

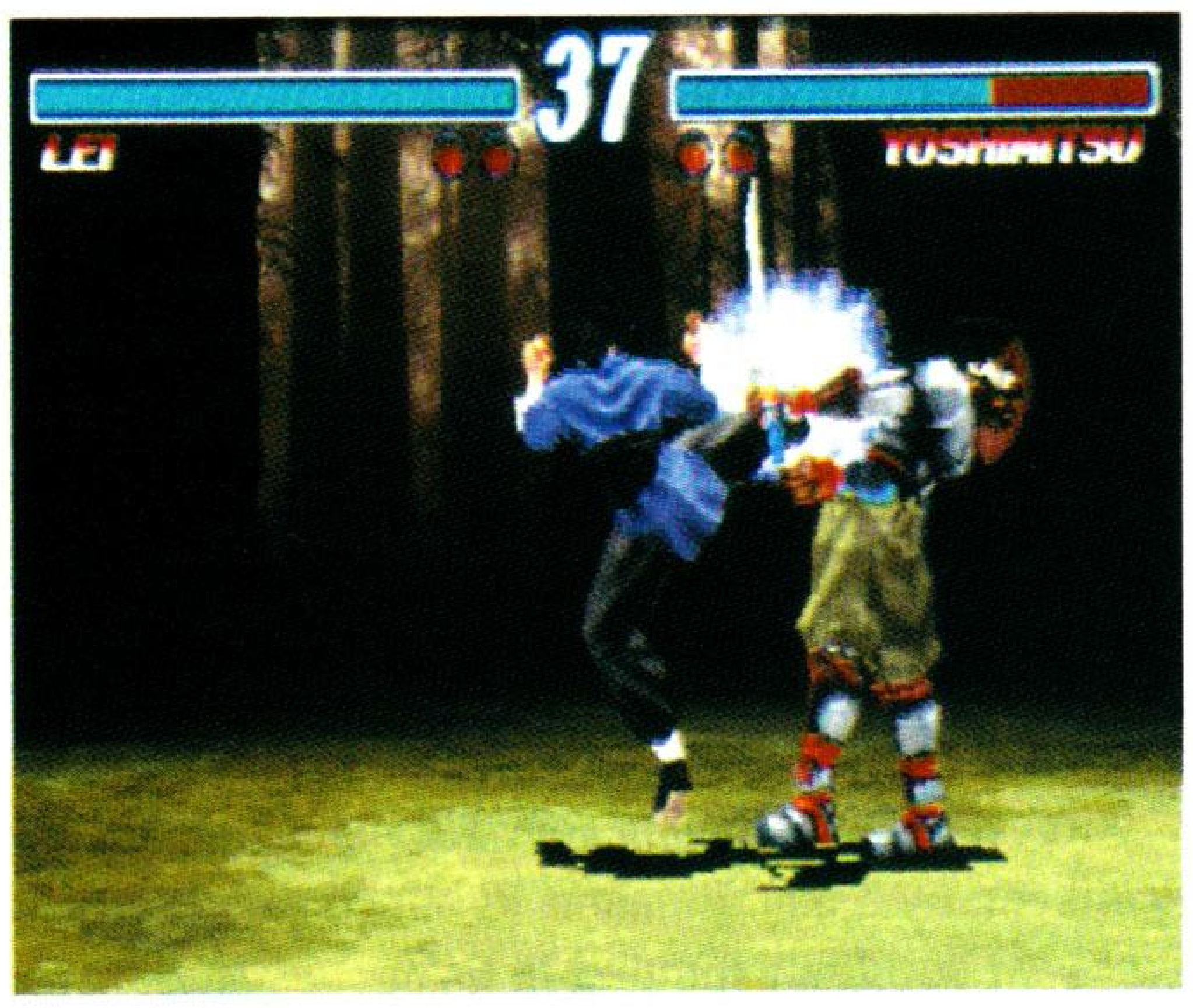




The second newcomer is grizzled Hong Kong detective, Lei Wulong. The finest investigator of all the Hong Kong police force, he employs a rather novel fighting style. His partner was investigating the drain of money from Mafia coffers when he died in a mysterious plane crash. During his investigation, his sixth sense convinces him that Kazuya is responsible and he swears vengeance. His objective is to face Kazuya and bring him to justice by any means. Master of the 'lie-down' technique, Lei is a fantastic fighter, as any arcade player worth his salt knows.

The last fighter to emerge from the undergrowth is the disgraced Heihachi Mishima. The 'Mightiest Boss' is the past overlord of the Mishima 'zaibatsu' (or conglomerate), this figure prided himself on being the master of Mishima karate, until he was beaten severely by his son in the previous tournament. This not only lost him his title, but also his directorship and the entire family wealth. Angry and penniless, Heihachi retreated into the mountains with a large bear known as Kuma, and began to train furiously. Now fighting fit, he is informed of the new competition and descends from his hideaway with his remaining hair in points, ready to retake his throne at all costs!

Heihachi Mishima is back to claim his throne! "My upstart son shall soon taste my wrath!"



As you may be able to tell, the forthcoming Tekken 2 is generating a great deal of interest in the **MAXIMUM** offices as well as in the gaming community at large. We have exhaustively played the arcade version (as readers of the first three issues of this magazine should know) and wait with giddy anticipation for the final product to arrive. Prepare for more Tekken 2 than you can possibly handle...

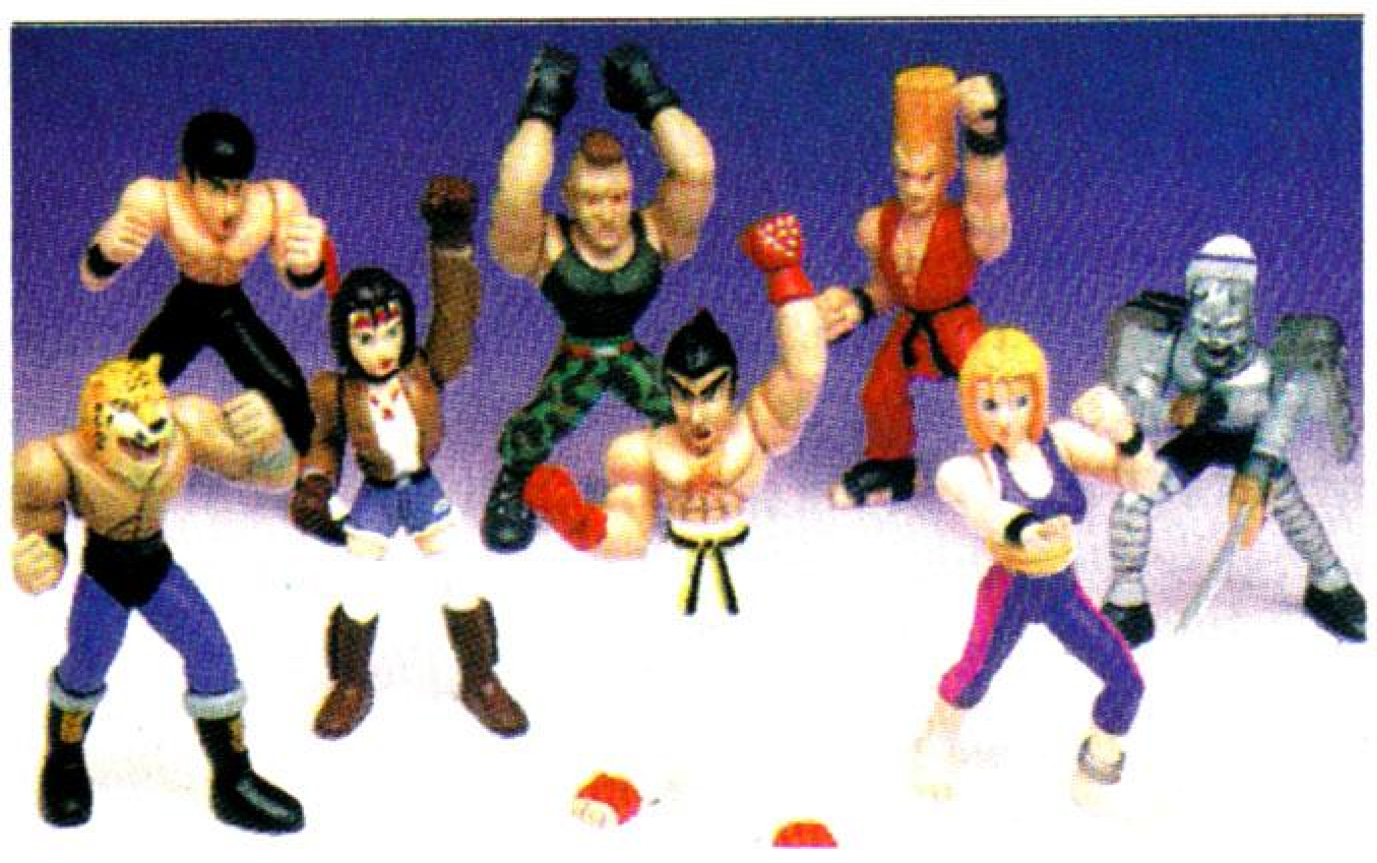
TEKKEN MERCHANDISE ARRIVES IN ABUNDANCE!

In other Tekken-related news matters, **MAXIMUM** has discovered a number of interesting tie-ins with the hugely popular beat 'em up, both in Japan and over here. The Land of the Rising Sun has benefited from a veritable Tekken explosion with various merchandise available in one form or another. Apart from the usual phone cards featuring rendered art from the second game (including two excellent designs featuring the Devil Kazuya and his godly twin), a Japanese toy manufacturer called Kabaya has released eight toy figures from the first game. These plastic fighters are more cartoon-like in their appearance and have movable arms for a variety of heroic poses, in the same manner as certain other dolls from another video game.

MAXIMUM COVERAGE?
As you may be able to tell, we're getting a tad excited at this forthcomnig fist fest. So do you want to know more about MAXIMUM's plans for this seminal fighting title? Well, turn to the back of the magazine for some rather exciting news...

Of greater interest to the Tekken 2 fanatic is the Namco 1996 Tekken 2 calender (which isn't being released in this country, unfortunately). With twelve pages of stunning computer art, this is set to be a real collector's item in years to come, and also features a rather special silver Kazuya torso emblazoned on the front cover. Throughout the months, January sees a pondering Kazuya glaring from is inner dojo chamber next to a flickering candle, whilst February has a marvellous picture of Yoshimitsu stalking his prey through a snow-covered pine forest. March is the month for special agent Nina Williams to strut her stuff against a metal backdrop before Heihachi appears in his training chamber, quietly supping on a large wine bottle. By May, the nature maiden Jun trots into view on the back of a wild horse accompanied by a host of furry friends, but by June the scene has changed to wanton carnage in Jack 2's laboratory. The Russian military droid has just finished off P Jack 1 and 2, and dumped them in a darkened room full of junk. Next up is the Dragon sensation, who spends July atop a small rocky outcrop whilst an eagle soars overhead, and then the action moves to the beach with Nina, Jun and the ample chested Michelle enjoyed a Tekken 2 ladies day out. As autumn beckons, we find Lei Wulong relaxing on a bed of leaves listening to some great tunes, and then the Indian wargirl Michelle decides to spend October perching on a fence outside her mother's farmstead. With the year drawing to an end, the flaming Paul rides into town, before the year finishes in a small Mexican chapel; the home of King the charity worker.

PLASTIC PUGALISTS!
Judge the quality of the new Japanese Tekken fighters for yourself (below). Also note that Namco's Wonderpark is giving away Tekken 2 calenders providing you've won 1000 tokens on their fairground machines, and this seems to be the only way to obtain the awesome art contained within.



Last on the **MAXIMUM** shopping list has to be 'Windermere - The Jungle Mixes'. This underground Jungle release features the deep beat talents of T - Power, Lemon D, Dillinja and Dubtronix in an epic reworking of the top lake-district inspired Tekken track. Apparently, the dance market is most receptive to computer game-related music, and the 'hipness' of the Namco title is reflected in the groovy sounds contained on the vinyl. No CD release unfortunately, but look out for this record on March the 11th.

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with the course itself, as the stages are simply portions of the overall circuit, and thus the game lacked a racing edge to it that Sega Rally achieved with four complete courses. Not quite as much longevity as the Sega title, but Dirt Dash favourably countered with arguably superior graphics and a real sense of entertainment throughout the race.

TOKYO WARS

The surprise of the ATEI was a four-player arcade tank simulation known as Tokyo Wars. This was an interesting slant at the Cybersled (and Cyber Commando) phenomena, with each linked player choosing to be the commander of a white or green artillery vehicle with the relatively simple mission of destroying all members of the opposing side. We chose a combat zone and took to the streets for a spot of one-on-one tank action! Sega's Desert Tank pales in comparison with this marvellous effort, and although only one weapon is available to fire, the frantic pace of the action more than makes up for any lack of gun choice.

The zones comprise either a dock area, or the streets of Tokyo itself, and it is this second level where the majority of jaws dropped. The polygon scenery is fantastic and the cityscape is supremely detailed enough for players to drive over cars, shunt other tanks (as they explode in a plume of fire) and generally blast apart a variety of sidewalks and shopfronts. The gameplay is best described as simplistic (you find either a drone enemy tank or another player and blow them apart), but the feeling of being buffeted about the cockpit of a huge prowling tank is unsurpassed. Locate a four-player version of this arcade monster now, find three other mates and roll round Tokyo high streets in tanks!

NINTENDO 64 delayed in America and Europe: NOA set the record straight

During the last few weeks, Nintendo's plans for world console domination with the Ultra 64 have been dealt two severe blows. Firstly, the near-simultaneous worldwide launch of the machine is now off. A new American release date of September 30 has been decided upon by Nintendo, who have basically told retailers and consumers that they won't release the machine until their killer games are ready. A copy of Peter Main's letter is reprinted on this page for your perusal. As a consequence of the US delay, the April launch of the machine in Europe (which nobody truly believed any way) has been set back to several weeks after the US launch. Also announced is an official change of name: the extremely lame Ultra 64 moniker has been dropped in favour of the far superior Japanese name for the machine: Nintendo 64.

In the attached letter, Mr Main also reaffirms a April 21 release date for the Japanese hardware. However, very strong rumours from Japan indicate that this date will no longer be the true launch day of the machine. Quoting huge demand outstripping potential supply, Nintendo appear to have set the launch back by another three months (that's July). No word has emanated from NCLj2 yet, but rest assured: as soon as some official comment has been passed, we'll print it.

On September 30th, dinosaurs will fly!

In the 60 days since NINTENDO 64 was unveiled at the Shoshinkai Trade Show in Japan , it has received an overwhelming amount of positive world-wide attention from the media, the trade, financial analysts, and most importantly, video game players themselves. Although the product has yet to be officially demonstrated outside of Japan, I wanted to take a moment to bring you up to date on news made since the show.

LAUNCH DATE

At the show, we announced a simultaneous US and European roll-out at the end of April, within days of the scheduled Japan launch. Since then, the realities of attempting to pull off such an enormous, virtually-simultaneous marketing feat have caused us to reconsider.

Before the Shoshinkai show, the Japanese publication Family Computer Magazine, published by Tokuma Publishing, polled Japanese software licensees on their sales expectations for N64 in that country within the first 12 months of availability. Sixty-three percent said unit sales would fall below three million; and 37% predicted sales of three million or more.

After the show, having seen N64 in action, an identical question was put to the same licensees by Takarajimasha Publications. Predictions for three million-plus units the first year suddenly jumped to 65%.

We were greatly gratified (and more than a little overwhelmed) with the predictions: according to those who know the market best, N64 in Japan alone in year one would easily exceed all worldwide sales to date for Sony's PlayStation. At that point, we decided to avoid at all costs, the huge problems that the video game industry encountered in 1995 when the US and other markets failed to receive full product or marketing support behind either the Saturn or PlayStation launches.

Consequently, while the Japan launch is still set for April 21, the North American launch will now take place on September 30, with Europe to follow in late fall.

NAME/LOGO

In order to further streamline production and to build equity for one world-wide product, Nintendo has now decided to adopt a single name, logo and distinctive hardware design for all markets. The product will be known as Nintendo 64, and the distinctive new logo that you see in the attached ad which will run in USA Today February 2, will soon be recognised in countries around the world, as the new standard for video game excellence.

PRICING

I am pleased to confirm that we are still planning, as originally announced, to offer the NINTENDO 64 hardware with a manufacturers' suggested retail price of under $250. Software for NINTENDO 64, is also still planned to carry a MSRP consistent with the price range of current best-selling new 16-bit SNES releases.

WRITABLE DISK DRIVE UNIT

While NINTENDO 64 will be introduced, as originally planned, with games on semiconductor Read-Only memory cartridges, the President of Nintendo Co., Ltd., Mr. Yamauchi, formally announced at Shoshinkai the ongoing development of a mass storage device which will allow game players to "write to" or customise the games they're playing. This writable disk drive unit will be attached to the bottom of the N64 console, with magnetic disks front-loaded into the unit. As a further expansion to the N64 system, the writable disk drive unit will be bundled with a 1 or 2 megabyte expansion RAM pack, which the game player can install into the N64's unique memory expansion slot. This expansion pack will further enhance N64's main system memory which is beneficial to both the magnetic disks and cartridges.

The N64's initial game distribution medium, the cartridge, uses Read-Only memory. CD ROM is also a Read-Only memory medium. Our purpose for providing the writable disk drive unit is to capitalise on the WRITABLE feature of this media to give game players a new gaming experience that players have never encountered with semiconductor ROM, CD-ROM or other Read-Only storage media. We are confident that we can provide the best of both worlds: the best action-filled cartridge games making the most of the semiconductor's fast access speed and never-before-experienced games using the virtue of writable magnetic disks. The two will be very complimentary.

The magnetic disks will measure 3 3/4" and will hold 64 megabytes of data or approximately 16 times the data contained in the SNES Donkey Kong Country cartridge. The performance standards for this type of product are measured as Average Seek Time (AST) and Data Transfer Rate (DTR). The AST for the NINTENDO 64 disk drive unit will be 150 ms or almost twice as fast as existing standards for either PlayStation or Saturn. The DTR is 1 MB/s or more than triple the speed of the competing products.

Although the manufacturer's suggested retail price is not yet set, we are intent on positioning it as a system expansion; in other words, significantly less expensive than the unit on which it plays. This breakthrough expansion unit is scheduled to be unveiled in late 1996 in Japan. We believe that it will deliver an equally-impressive technological advantage as that which the N64 will enjoy over competing machines. As previously announced, the raw operating speed of N64, or the CPU clock speed, is an incredible 94 Mhz versus only 34 Mhz for PlayStation and 28 Mhz for Saturn.

SOFTWARE

Obviously this is the single most important part of the equation. All the technical data in the world about hardware superiority, won't be the answer with this next generation of video gaming.

The key is to ensure that all software for NINTENDO 64 truly delivers a quantum leap in total game play value over anything currently experienced on any dedicated gaming machine or personal computer. Based upon the incredible reaction to the stunning Super Mario 64 game at the Shoshinkai Show, from retailers, developers, media and game players of all ages, we're obviously on the right track.

From the start, it has not been our intent to rush as many titles as possible to the market. That's because we want to ensure that each title we release for the system to be capable of surpassing any prior video game experience. The games currently under development by our 17 hand-picked Nintendo second and third-party developers, plus the impressive Nintendo titles from our in-house development teams, will be the true testimony to this promise. The plan is to introduce 8-12 of these spectacular titles to the North American market in 1996.

I am pleased to be able to provide you with this important update on NINTENDO 64, and look forward to providing you with further details over the weeks ahead. The full unveiling of NINTENDO 64: the next generation of video gaming, will take place at the E3 show May 16-18 in Los Angeles.

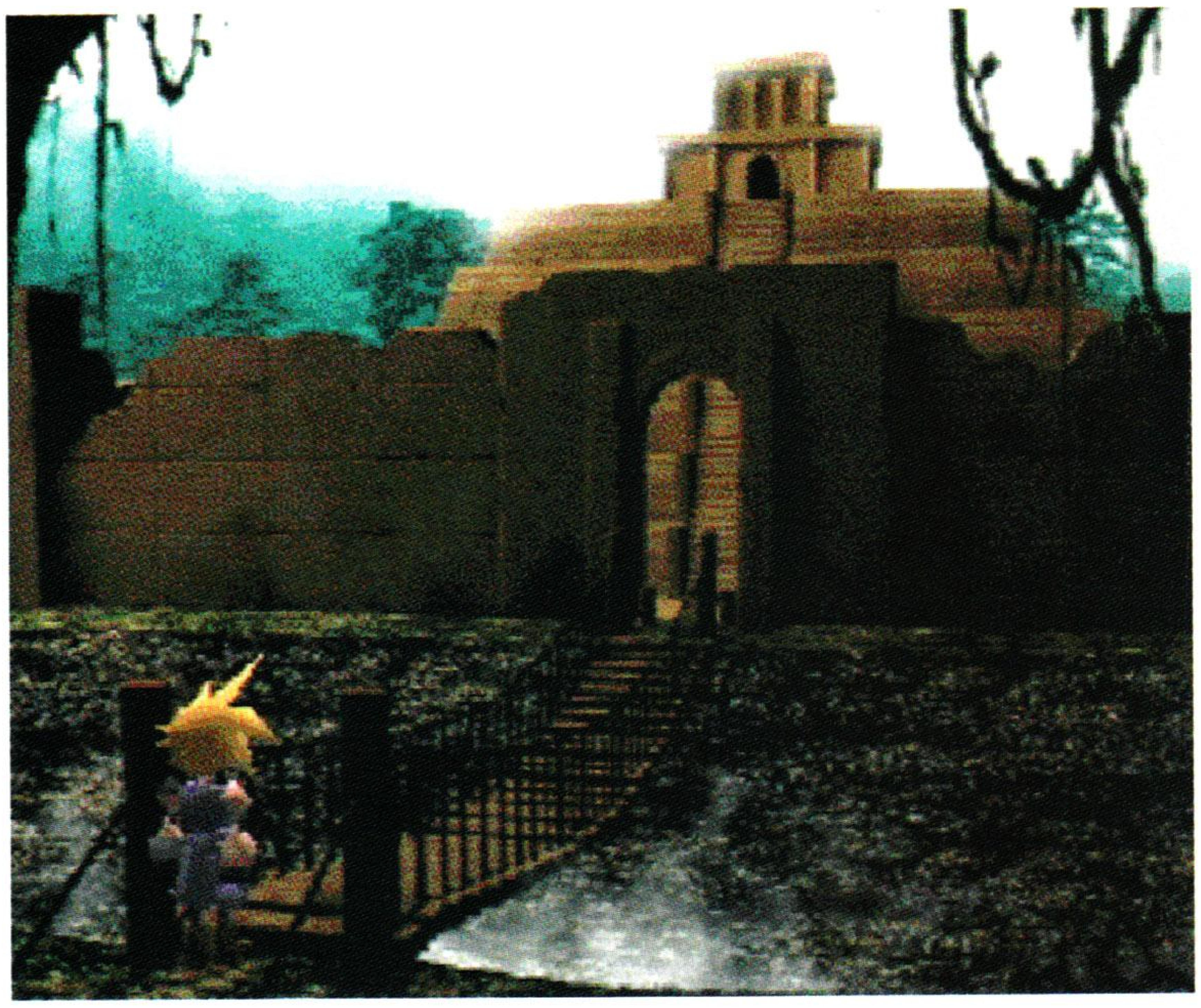
Yours sincerely,

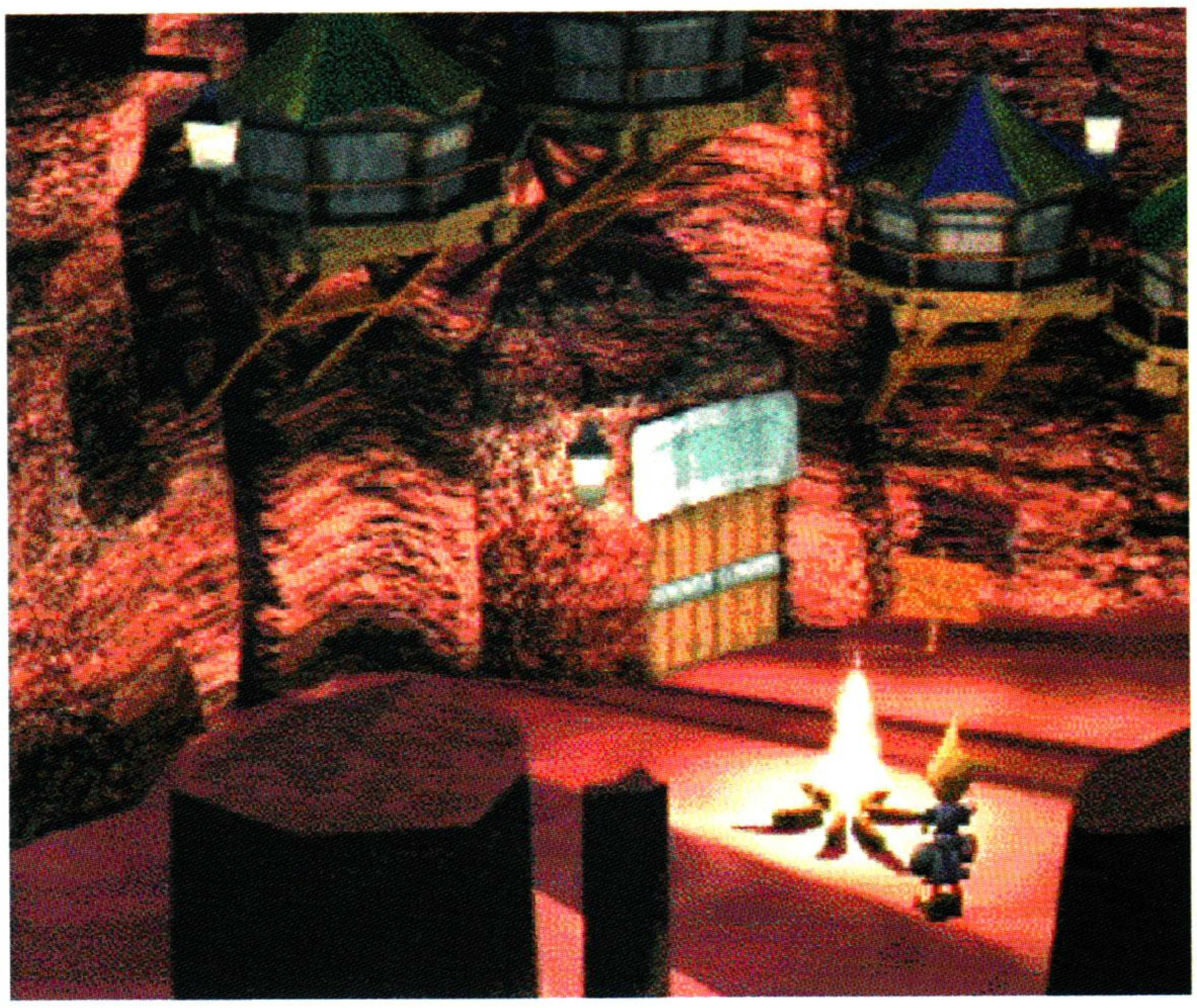
Peter Main, Executive Vice President, Sales and Marketing

SQUARESOFT Head for Sony

PS
SQUARE
Square move to PlayStation!
FINAL FANTASY VII
AVAILABLE CHRISTMAS IN **JAPAN**

Squaresoft, purveyors of the world's finest role-playing games have formally announced that their forthcoming megagame, Final Fantasy VII is to be a *Sony PlayStation* product, having firmly distanced themselves with the Nintendo 64 camp. This is a hugely embarrassing situation for Nintendo, who had previously counted on Square for a huge amount of sales. The word from the Japanese RPG uberdevelopers is that the N64 cartridge system just doesn't have the necessary capacity. Due out at Christmas, FFVII is planned to be released on two CDs, showing that Square really do need that memory for their latest title.

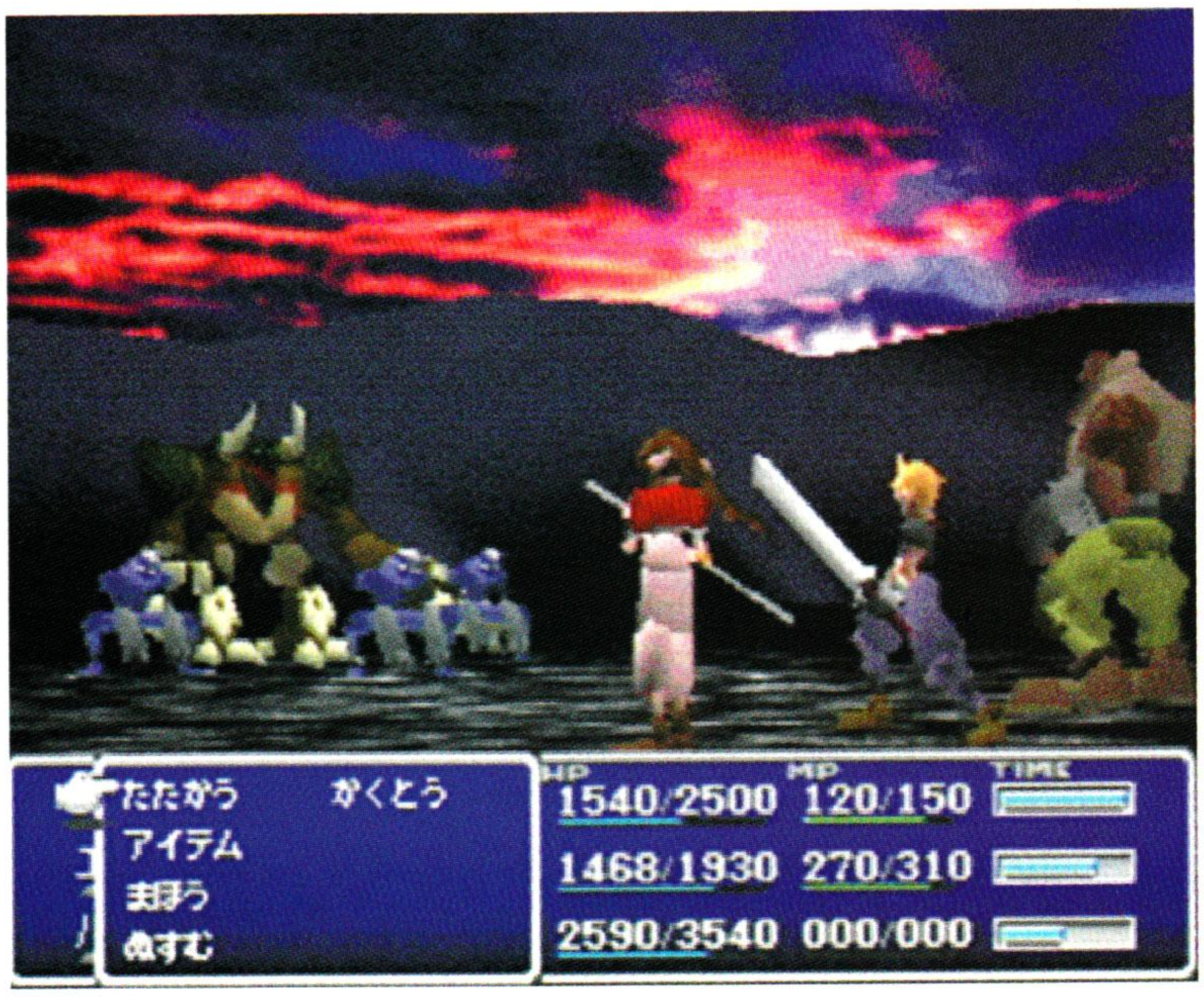


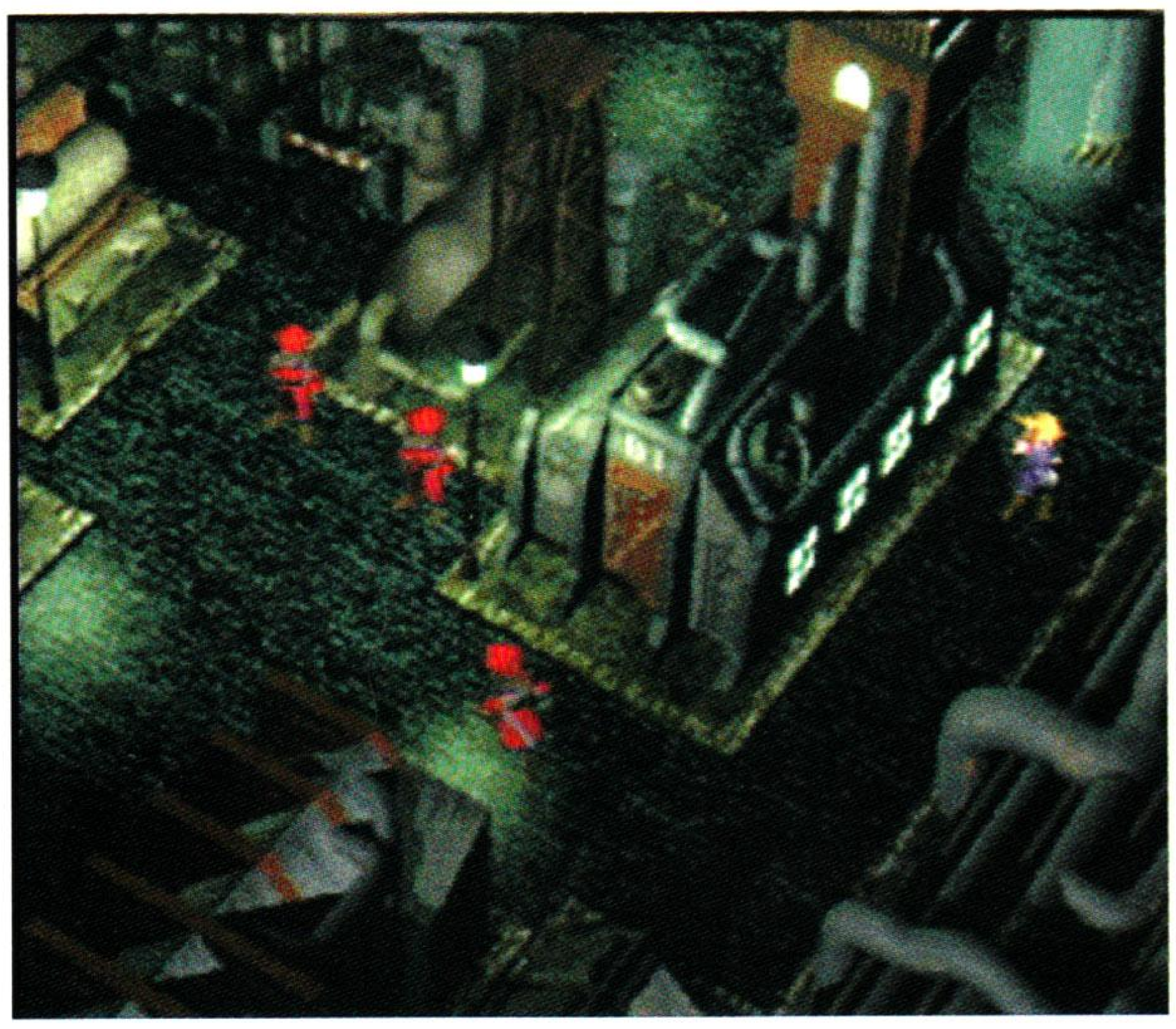


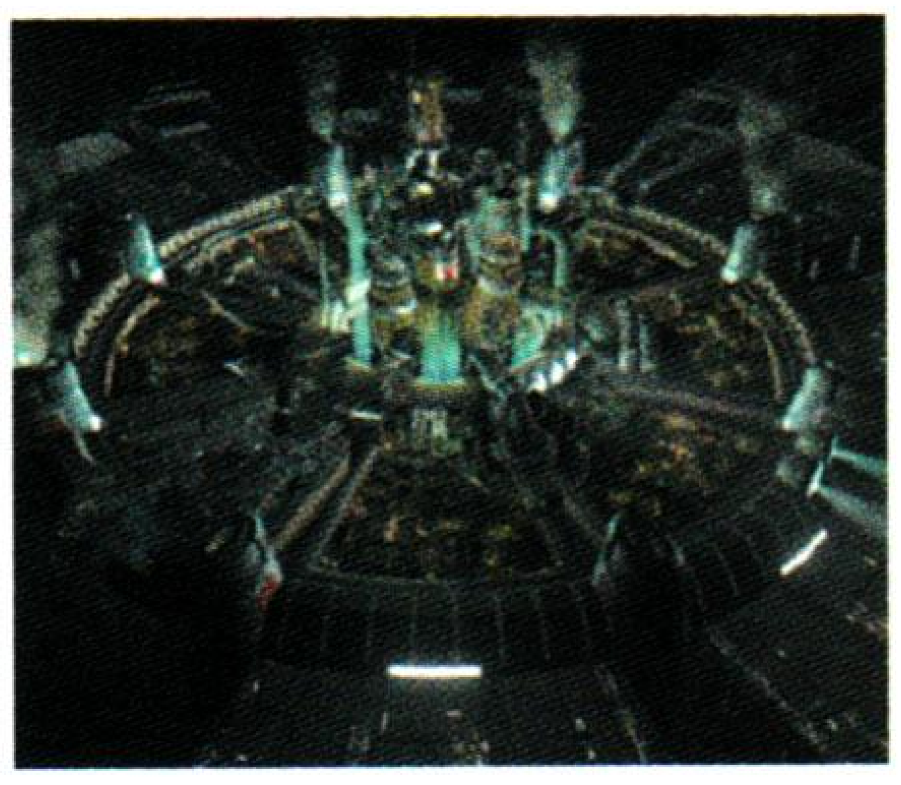
The game certainly looks incredible, being a move for the FF series into pseudo-3D. The stunning backdrops are composed of pre-rendered models, with some real-time light sources placed on top to add extra realism. The main characters are fully gouraud-shaded persons, looking for all the world like cut-down Toshinden characters. As you can see, the game looks absolutely incredible and is a huge shot in the arm for Sony in Japan, which has seen market share slip away from them as Sega's coin-op conversions (particularly VF2) practically sell the rival machine. Now at last they have a weapon every bit as potent as Sega's AM produce.

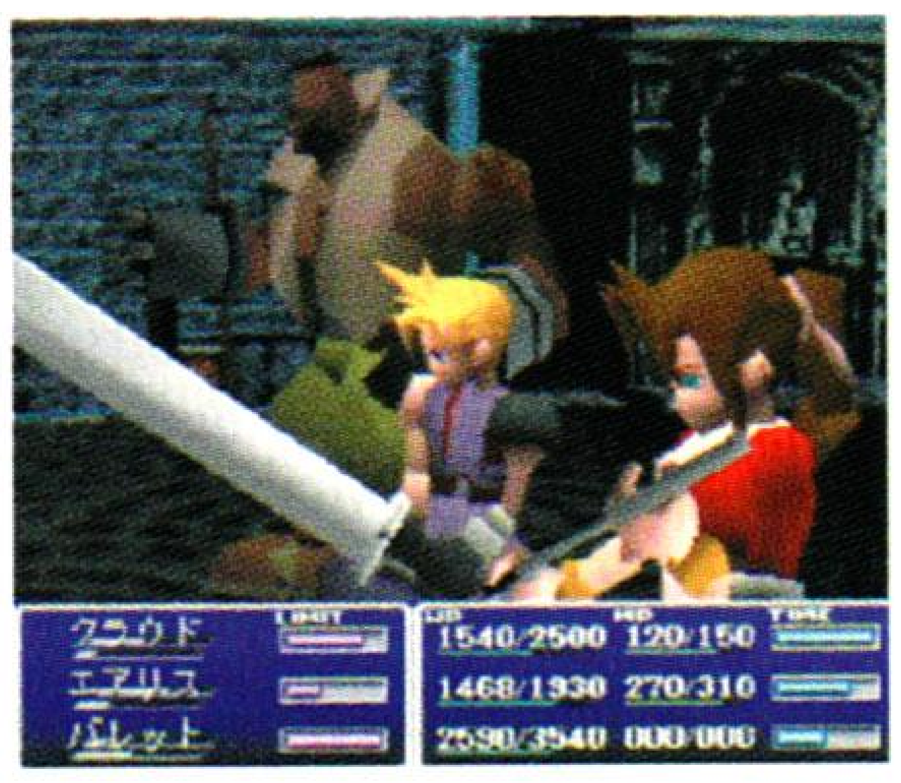
Contrary to some scaremongering reports, Square have abandoned the N64 altogether. Projects are still planned for the machine's 64DD "Bulky Drive", but Square wish to see the technology in action before committing resources.

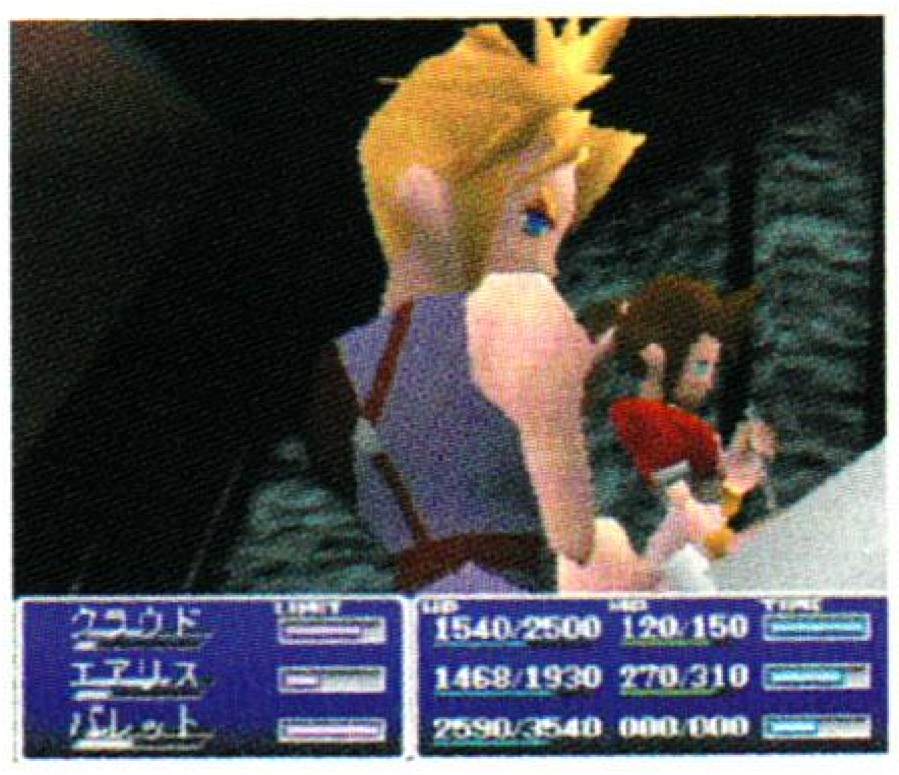
Cementing the alliance with Sony, Square were pretty quick off the mark in releasing screenshots of their first PlayStation game. Feast your eyes on FFVII - it looks completely amazing...











RENDERED FANTASY

As you can see from our pictures, Square's Final Fantasy VII is a combination of pre-rendered backdrops, stunning light-sourcing and realtime polygon characters. The result is a visually breathtaking videogame - we can't wait to see the finished game which should be ready by Christmas!

AWESOME CLOSE-UPS

In the preliminary screens released by Square, we get to see the combat scenes for the new Final Fantasy game. The 3D is used to excellent effect here and you can see the amount of detail that Square has put into its main characters which rival Toshinden in terms of quality. This is going to be one hot title...

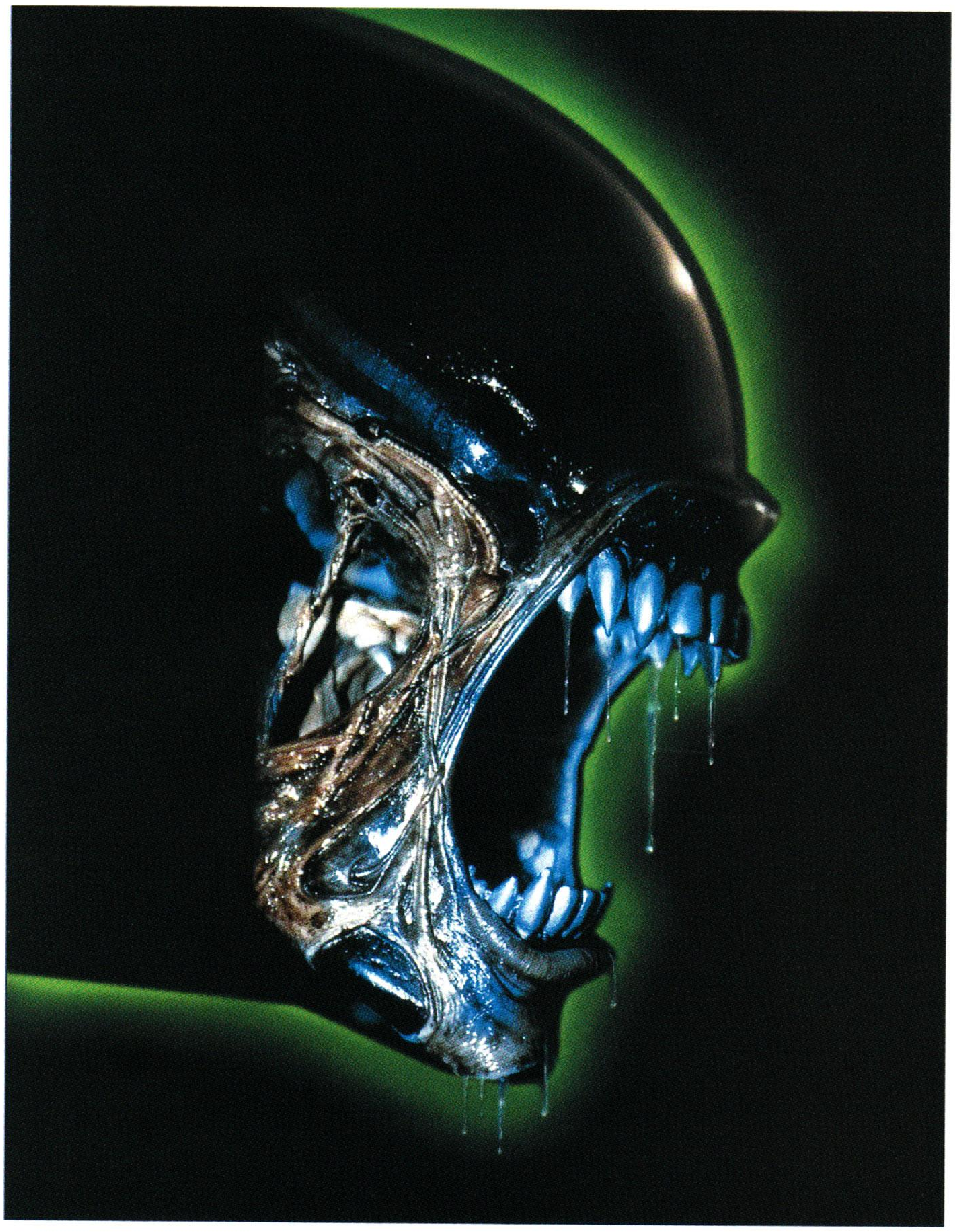
MAXIMUM NEWS

PS The long-awaited movie tie-in **ALIEN TRILOGY**

ACCLAIM DUE FOR A **UK** RELEASE IN **MARCH**, PRICE **£44.95**

ACCLAIM ALIENATED!

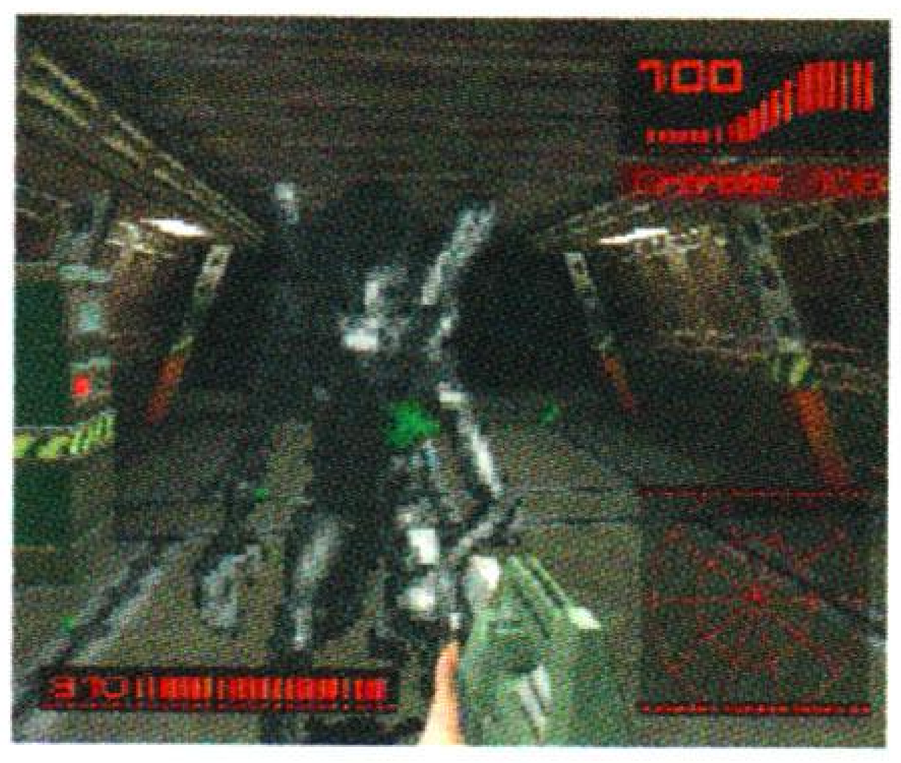
ALIEN TRILOGY

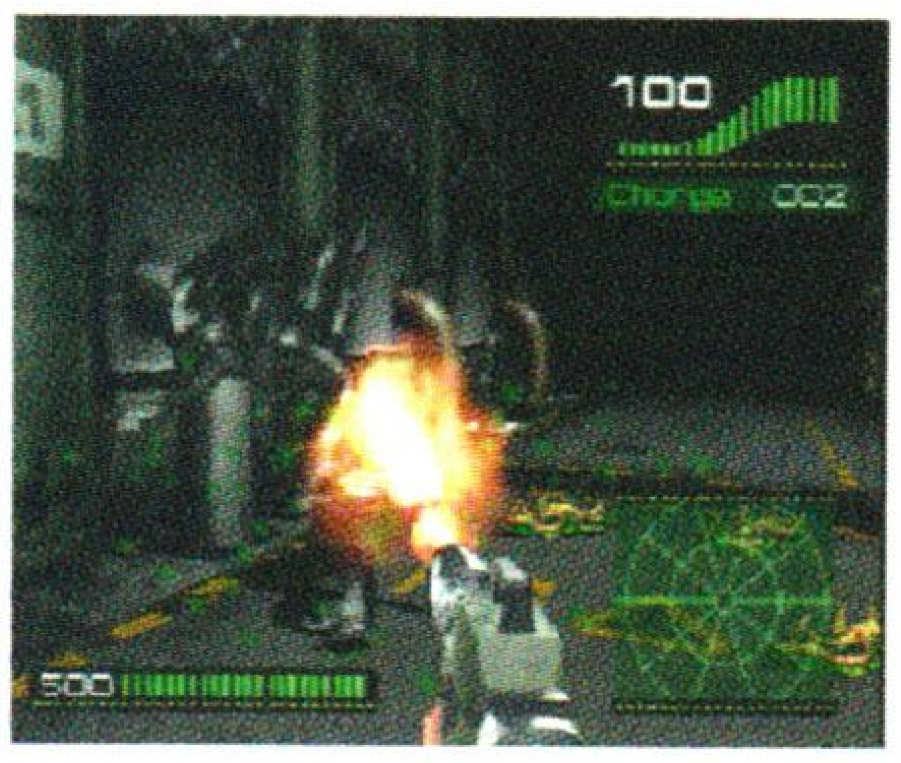


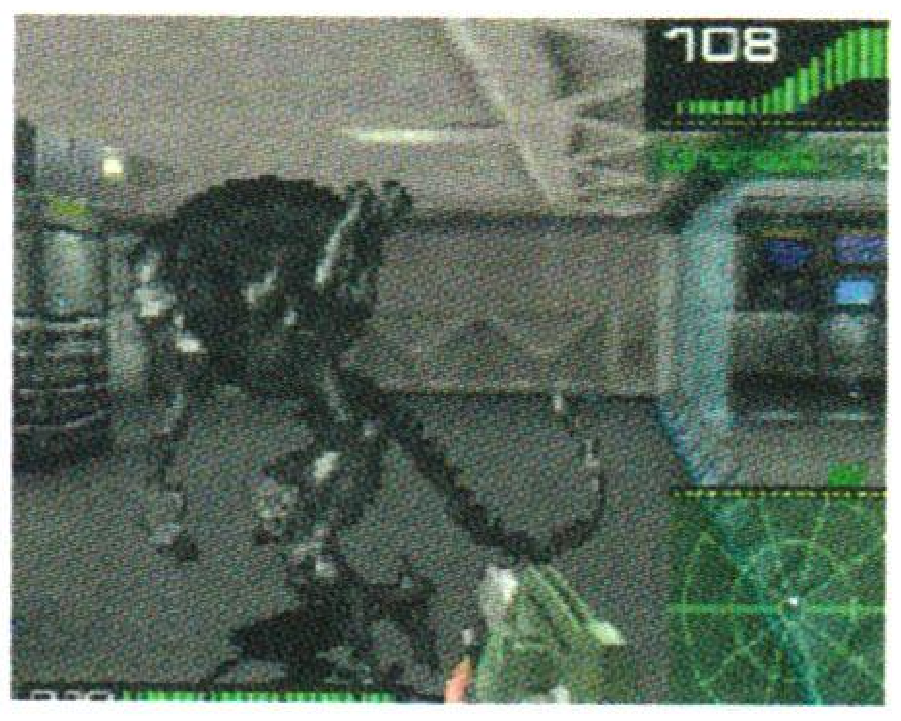
When the Saturn and PlayStation were still on the drawing boards in the respective Sega and Sony labs, Probe Software were deep in the development of their most ambitious title to date: Alien Trilogy. Originally conceived as a Mega-CD, 3DO then 32X product, the game is now set to appear on the Saturn and PlayStation. The latter version is just about complete... MAXIMUM investigates.

One of the more... interesting... additions to the PC version of Doom was a file that changed all of the monsters to Aliens, complete with sampled sound effects from the trilogy of excellent movies (well, apart from the last one). Well, such frippery is no longer required because Acclaim's Alien Trilogy seems to do the job quite nicely.

As that paragraph suggests, Alien Trilogy is a first person perspective blaster that casts you as Warrant Officer Ripley, the battle-hardened xenomorph destroyer from the films. Using the next generation machines' advanced 3D hardware, Probe have done an excellent job in bringing the darkened corridors and locations that populate the movies into the videogame. This has reaped some rewards on a technical level. Like Kileak, The Blood 2, the game features a super-smooth frame rate and stunningly detailed rooms - the compromise being that the 3D is somewhat short-sighted. But still, that doesn't really matter - after all, the Alien films are all dark and forboding, aren't they? Helping to make up for the deficit in visual depth is the sheer amount of detail in the landscapes - walls aren't just flat textures as in Doom. Some wall sections have their own 3Dness (just like Kileak) sometimes hiding secret passages. What is quite new is the range of destructible scenery on offer. This usually takes the form of crates which can be blasted open to reveal power-ups or (horror of horrors!) a Face-Hugger, ready to impregnate you with an alien egg.



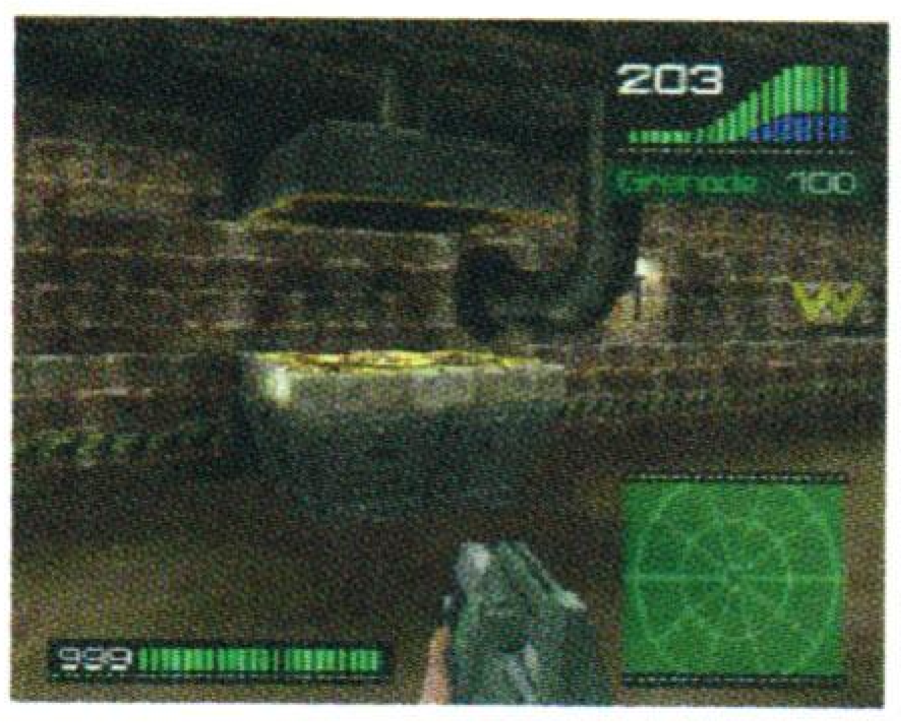




ALIENS FROM ALL SIDES

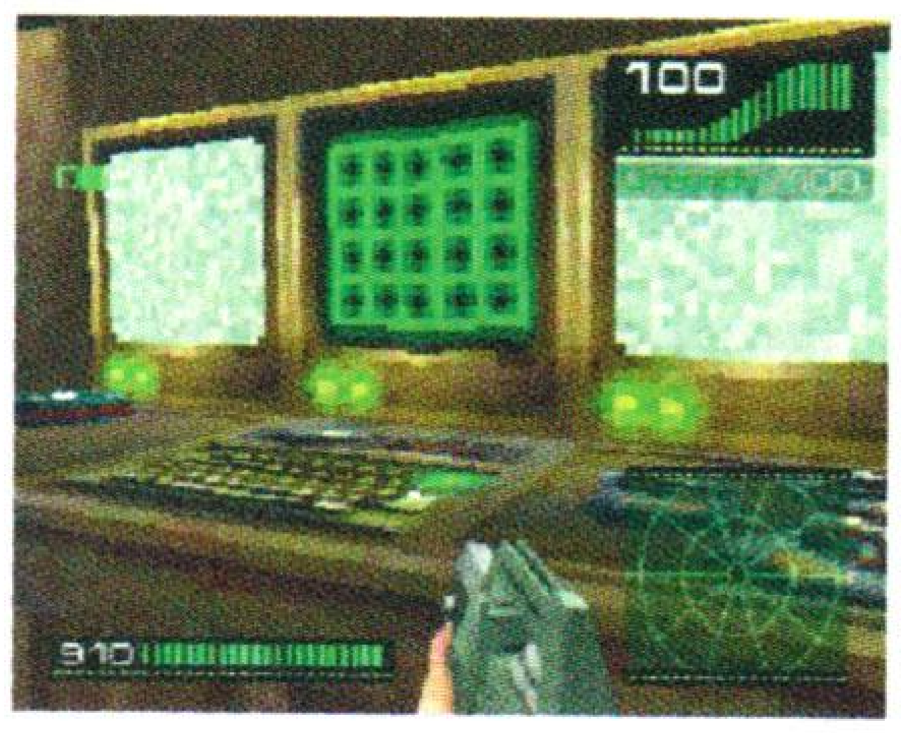
As you can see from these pictures, the Alien sprites aren't just 2D bitmaps - they're viewable from many different angles and look great, although the animation isn't quite perfect.

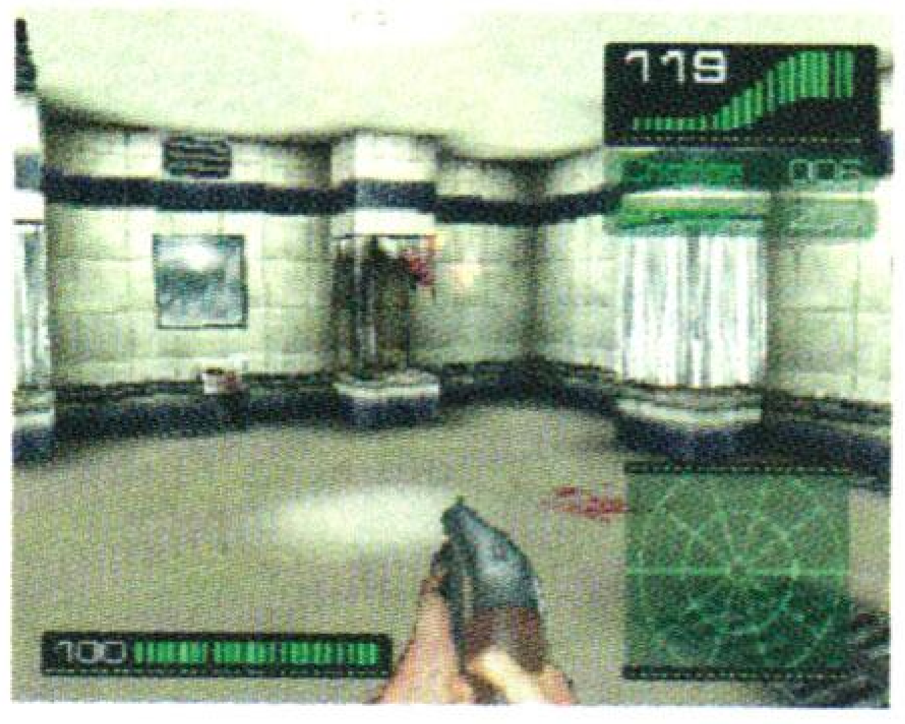
Awesome real-time visuals generate an excellent Aliens atmosphere!



EXCELLENT OBJECTS

As you can see from the surrounding shots, the details on the wall-mounted objects is smart.





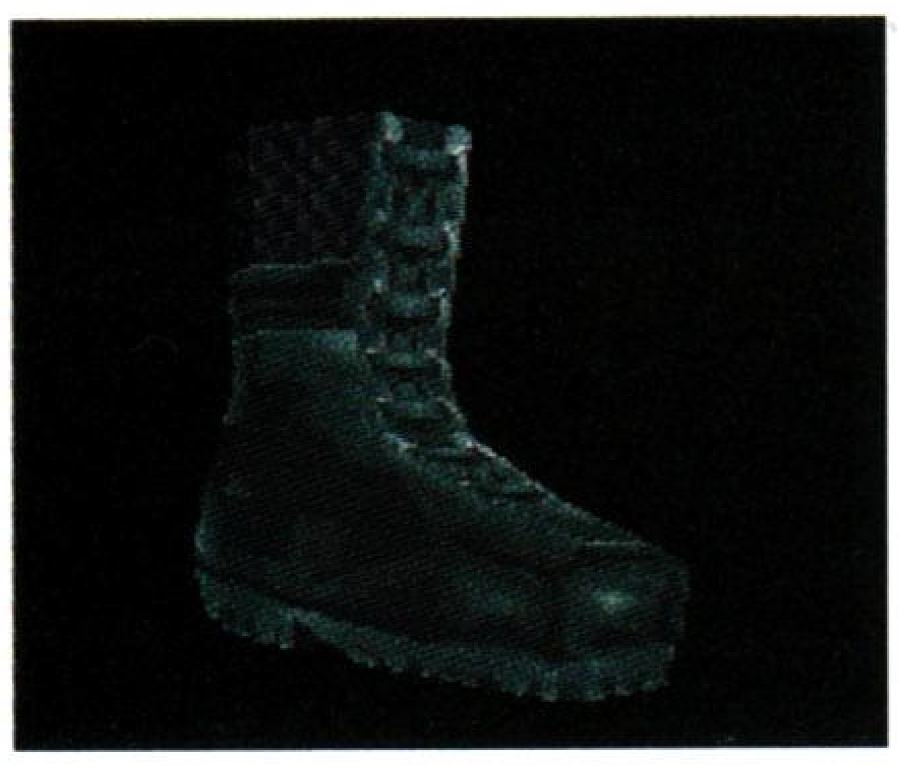
Probe have matched expectations by including just about every strain of alien you can imagine. The aforementioned Face-Huggers make an appearance, along with the baby Chest Busters, fully grown Aliens, plus gene-spliced xenomorphs. This latter breed made their first appearance in Alien3, where a Face-Hugger impregnated a dog, which gestated a different type of Alien based on animal characteristics. The scenario of the game expands upon the Company's agenda of growing Aliens for the biogenetic weaponry, so you also get two types of Company agent patrolling the 3D world. The weedier humans crumble under the lightest of firepower, while the more powerful synthetic lifeforms (like Bishop in Aliens) take a good deal more ordinance to take down. What is disappointing is the fact that the Face-Huggers only target Ripley - the Company agents are left unmolested.

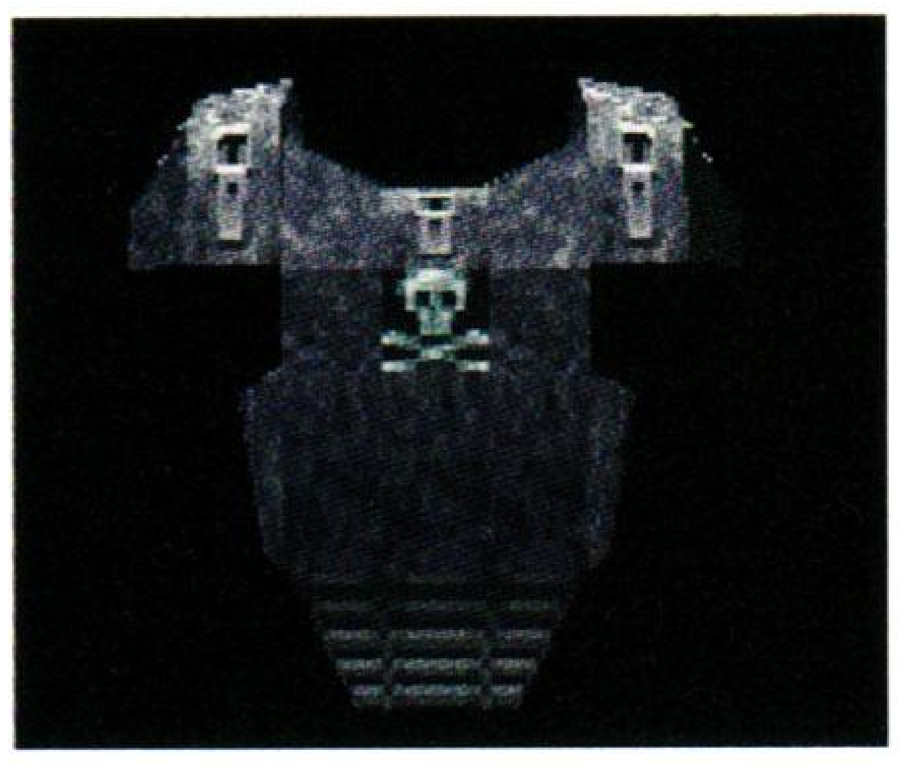
Technically, Probe have surpassed Doom with its enemies. Like Doom, the inhabitants of Alien Trilogy are scaled sprites, but unlike Doom you can walk around them and view them from different angles. Although id's game did have some side and back frames of animation, once the monsters had caught sight of you, the front was all you saw. There's none of that in Alien Trilogy.

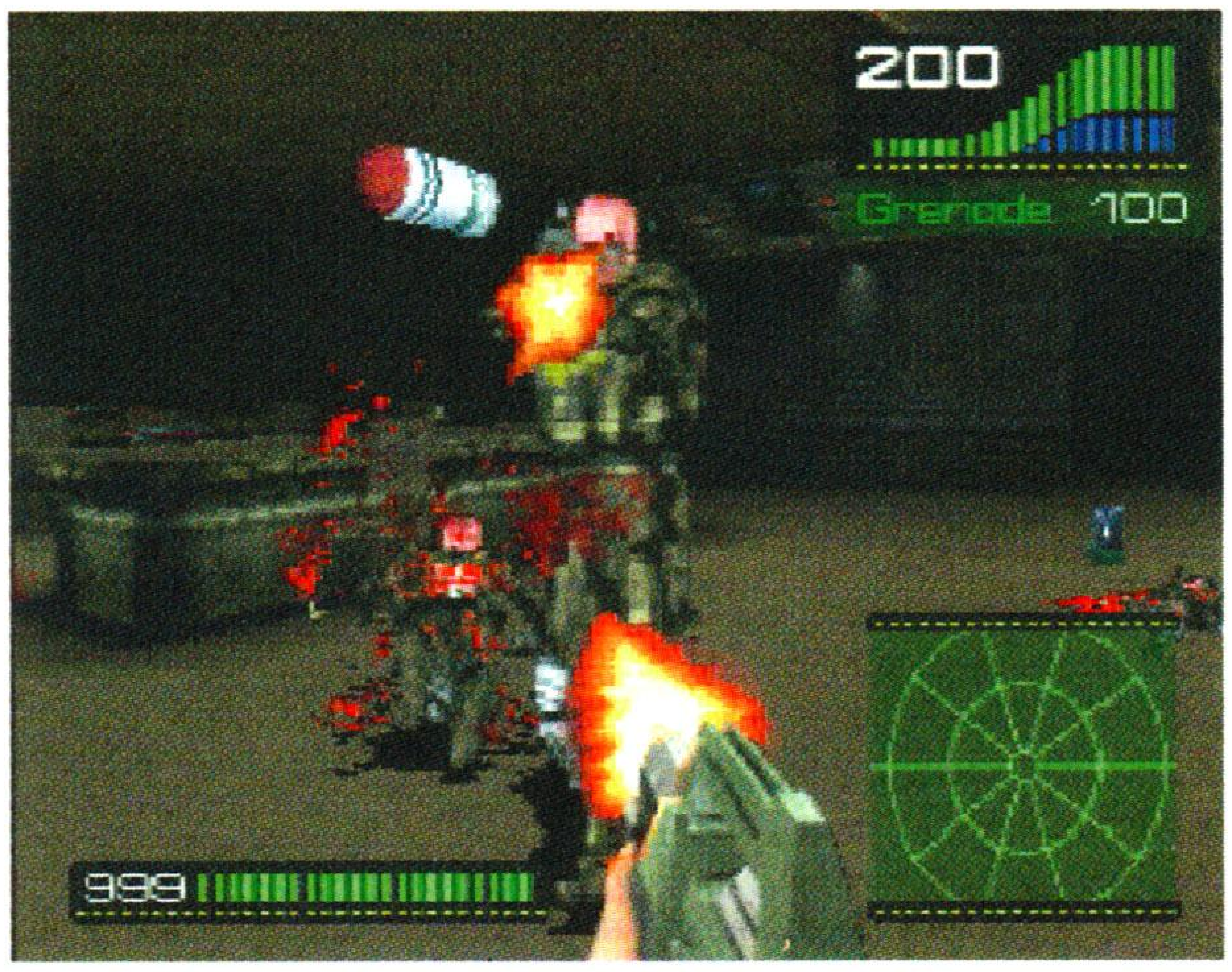
The success of this type of game is often down to the type of weaponry you get your hands on and Alien

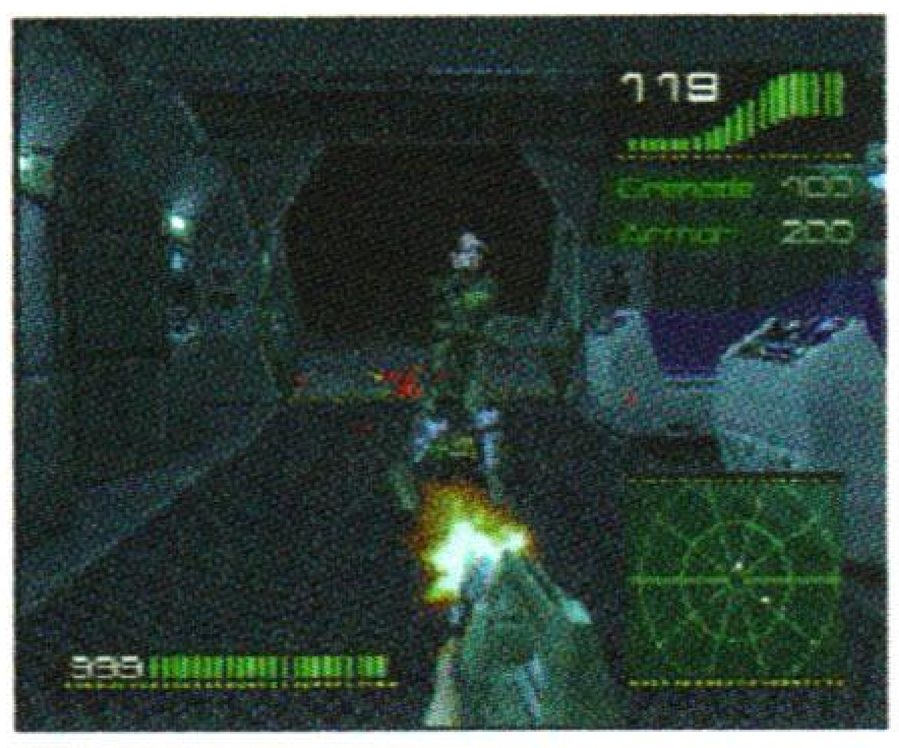
OTHER BITS

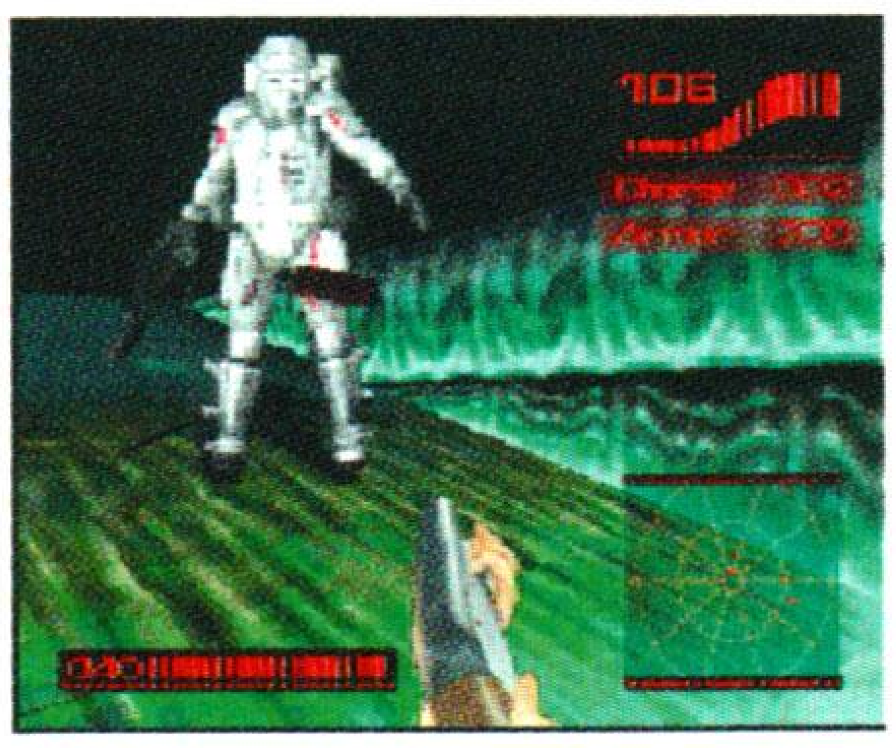
A selection of 3D objects that are additional to the collectable weaponry in Alien Trilogy. A number of these objects are dotted around the 3D walkways.











BLAST! KILL! DIE!

A couple of action shots to the left showing Ripley in action against the Company agents.

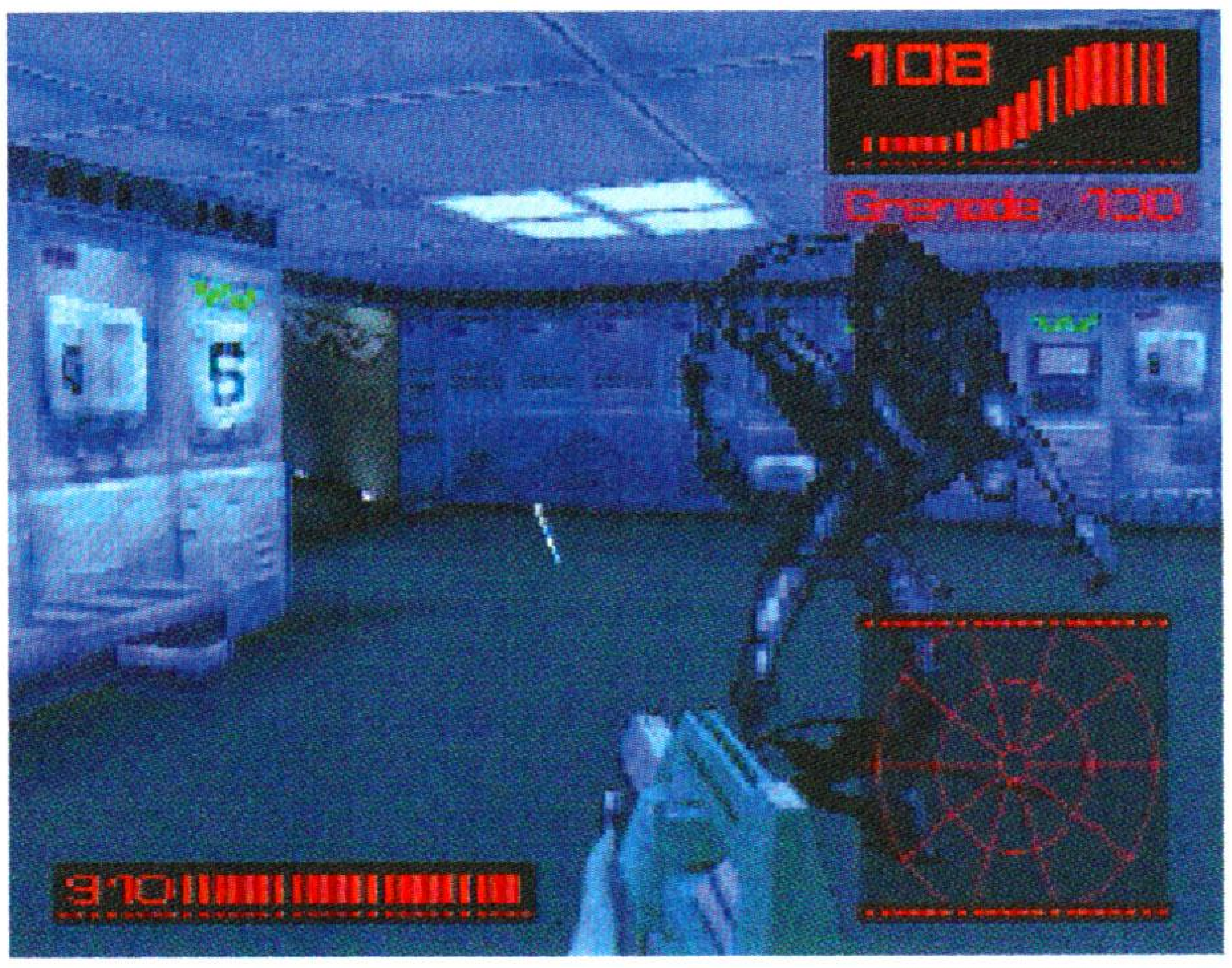
Trilogy is well kitted out. Alien-busting equipment include pulse rifles, flame throwers, shot guns and explosives. The latter piece of equipment can also be used to explode weak walls, opening up new areas of the game.

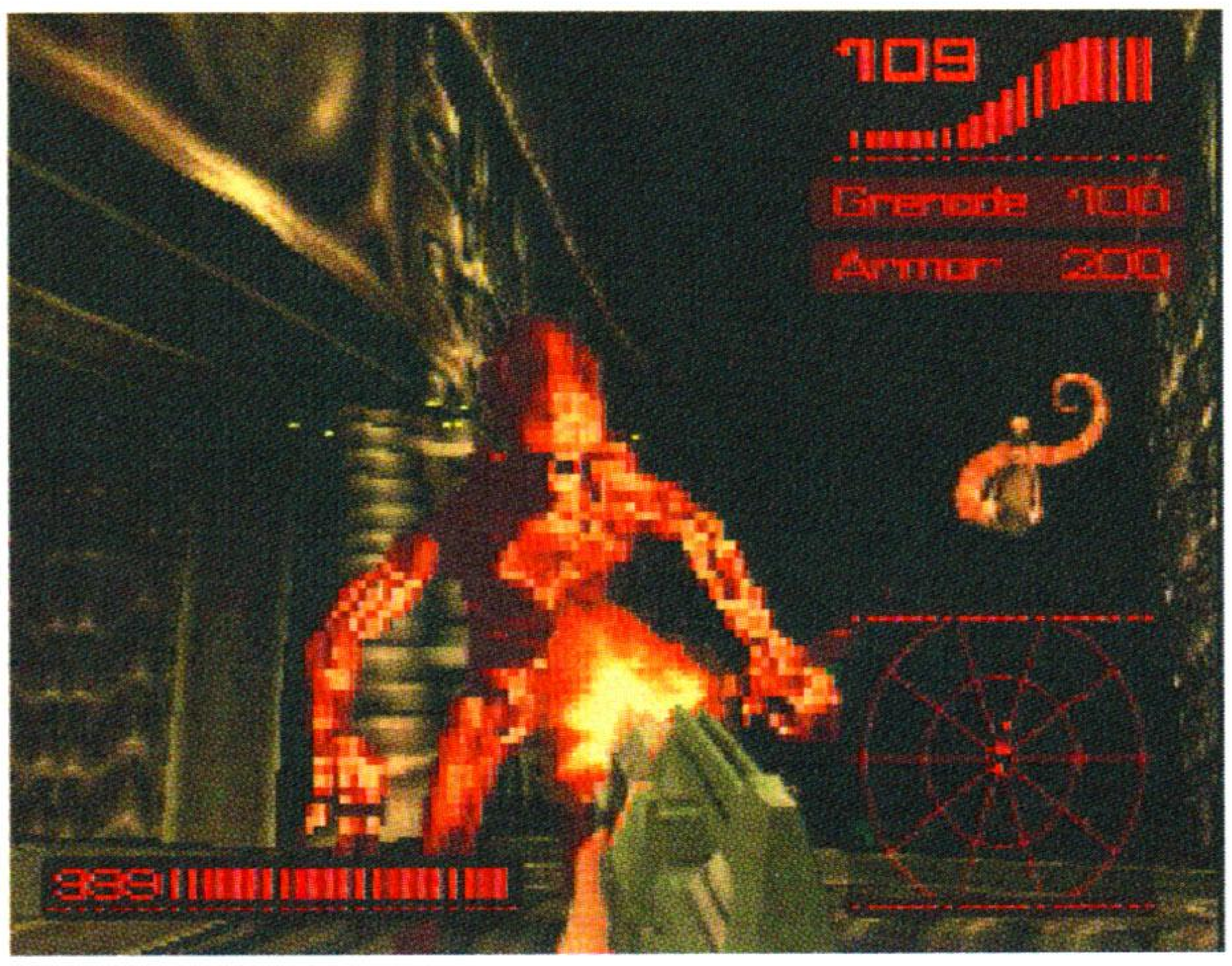
The usual Doom-style puzzling and secret areas are also evident in Alien3, although the cerebral work required in Alien Trilogy is a bit more intensive (not just searching for keys to open doors). A grand total of 33 levels have been coded in, but Probe have indicated that meeting certain conditions (for example, blasting 99% of all the Aliens on specific levels) will open up secret areas. End-of-level boss confrontations are also evident, with Ripley going up against the might of the Queen Alien.

Adding to the atmosphere are some excellent aural effects. Probe's in-house musicians have created some pretty atmospheric music to match each level, while the programming team are proud to boast that over 60% of the impressive sound effects have been directly sampled from the game's soundtrack. This ensures an authentic sound to the game, which Alien purists should enjoy.

Considering the sheer depth of subject matter associated with the Alien mythos, how were Probe able to incorporate everything from the films? Some liberties have had to be taken with the order the films run in. For example, the game starts with Ripley visiting LV426 (as in Aliens), rescuing colonists before moving on the prison planet of Alien3. The final area of the game takes a trip to the first Alien film plotline, with Ripley investigating the enormous "Bone Ship" that the crew of the Nostromo discovered in the first film.

From our admittedly brief dalliance with Alien Trilogy, it would appear that Acclaim are onto a winner with their first major PlayStation product. The game succeeds in bringing the Alien story into a game form admirably and the technical proficiency seen in the game is most impressive. The question is, beneath the impressive facade, is the game itself enjoyable to play? This is a query we intend to have answered in time for issue #5 of **MAXIMUM**.





Could this be the ultimate first person Doom-style action adventure?

SHORT STORIES

Alien Trilogy coders Probe have a history of handling some of Acclaim's most important titles, having coded up the likes of Alien3, Judge Dredd, Batman Forever, plus the Sega translations of Mortal Kombat and its sequel. Therefore it came as no surprise to see that the company were recently bought out by Acclaim. Probe still have some contracts to carry out for other companies - most notably with Die Hard Trilogy (see page 130) for Fox Interactive.

Quick review of another Probe product: the title in question being Mortal Kombat 2, which has just turned up on the Saturn. The **MAXIMUM** advice is to steer well clear of this lacking conversion. The game itself has dated badly, and the game isn't even a perfect conversion. Of course, we're known for not liking MK and its brethren much at all, but the quality of this conversion really is lacking - even MK fans are going to be disappointed. If you're a Saturn owner after some MK action, it really would be more profitable to wait for GTi's forthcoming Mortal Kombat 3...

Despite the fact that Ripley died in Alien3 after discovering that she was carrying the Alien Queen, 20th Century Fox are currently carrying out pre-production work on Alien4, starring... Sigourney Weaver. Expect a preposterous explanation for the return of Ellen Ripley.

NO MIST HERE!

The usual Bullfrog style misting effects aren't used in Alien Trilogy to avoid polygon pop-up - because everything's so dark, your field of vision is limited any way. Cunning, those Probe chaps, aren't they?

MAXIMUM NEWS

PS PC HIT FOR PLAYSTATION! **DESCENT**

INTERPLAY | PRICE AND AVAILABILITY **UNCONFIRMED**

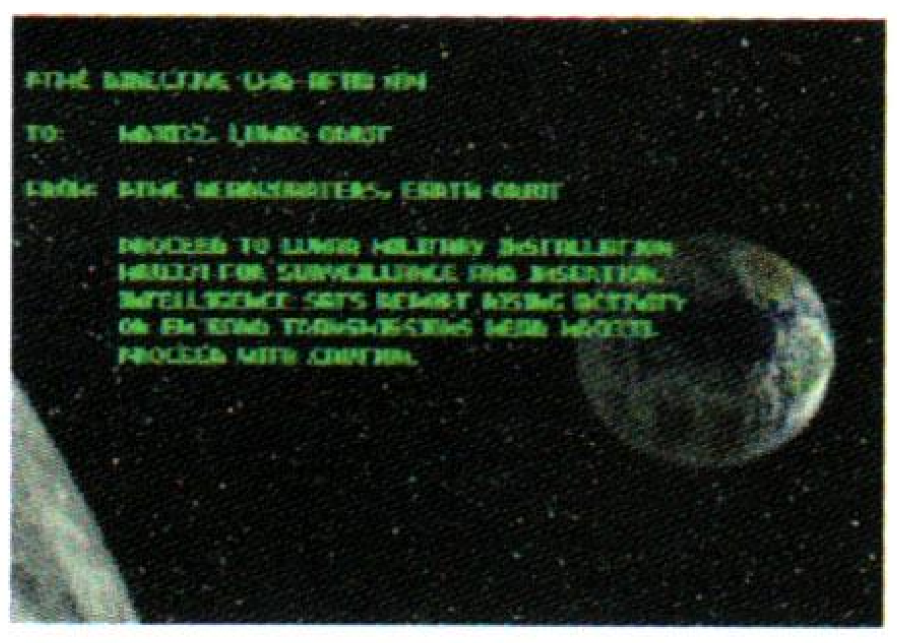
GOING DOWN ON PLAYSTATION

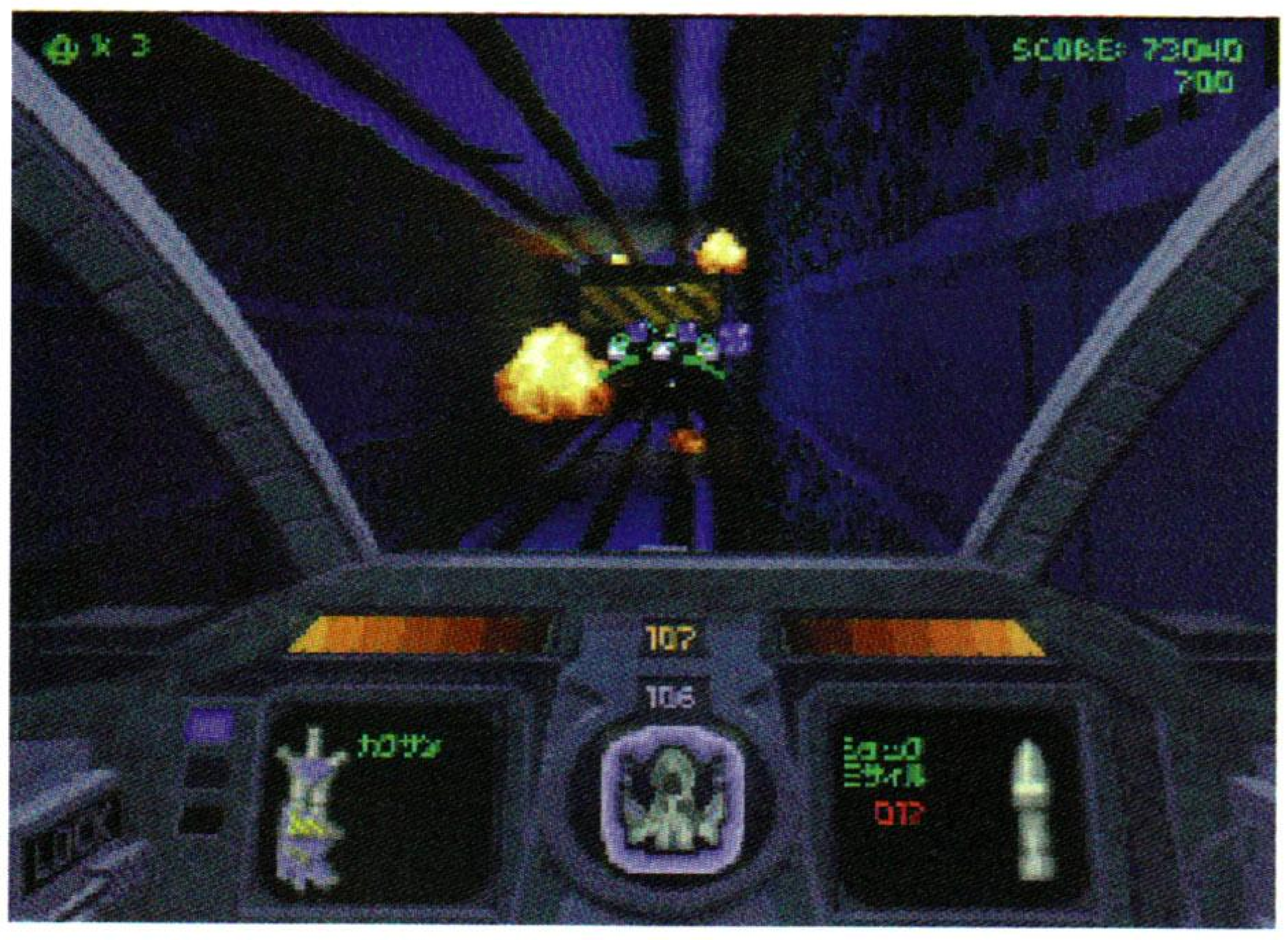
DESCENT

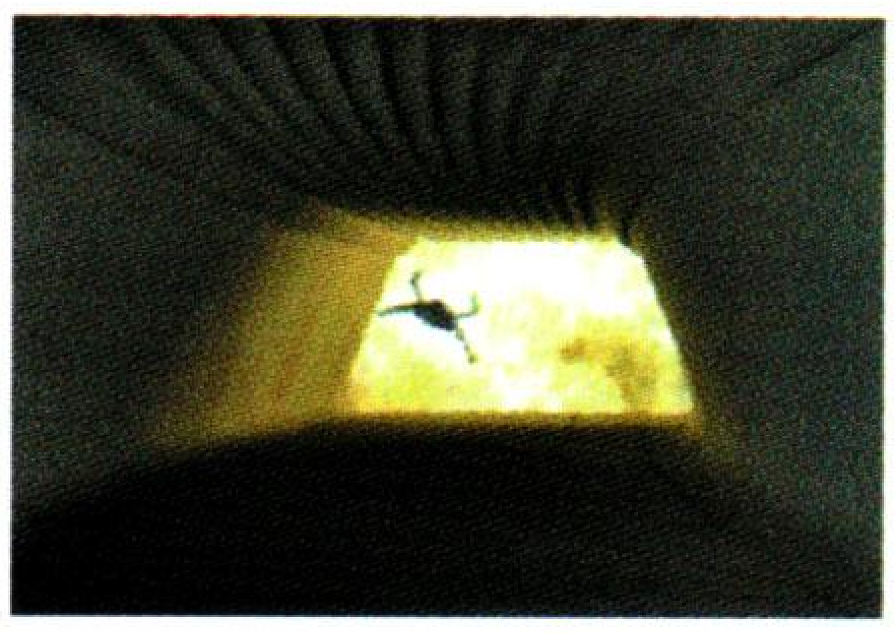
Deep within the industrial mineral mines on Pluto, something is amiss. The artificially intelligent mining droids have rebelled against their human masters, and have taken over several of the terran mining outposts, holding the civilian computer operators hostage. The company who own the mining chain, the Post Terran Mineral Corporation, are quick to recognise the severity of the situation. If word of this were to be released to their investors, it would seriously compromise their market position. Realising this, and the fact that any rescue operation they might attempt must be extremely covert, the company has drafted in an outside specialist to enter the mines, single handedly eradicate all traces of the rogue droids, and rescue any civilian hostages still alive. It seems like a dream job: a desperate client, good pay, nothing but unarmed mining droids to engage, and state of the art (PTMC funded) descent hardware. But once you enter into the first mine, a mile beneath the surface of Lunar Base one, it soon becomes apparent that all is not what it seems...

FRONT-END STUFF

The Descent conversion onto PlayStation appears to be pretty much identical to the PC original, with all of the original front-endery translated across.







PC owners will already be familiar with Interplay's Descent, a fast paced ballistic 3D shoot 'em up with a difference. Unlike other first person perspective action games, Descent offers the player a truly three dimensional experience, with each of the games 30 individual mining complexes being composed of a network of multi layered horizontal and vertical corridors and rooms. In a specially designed anti-grav combat skimmer that allows for 360 degrees of movement, the player must hang on to their senses as they plunge straight down huge mine shafts and twist around rotating jagged tunnels, confronted by lethal aliens and rogue robots at every turn.

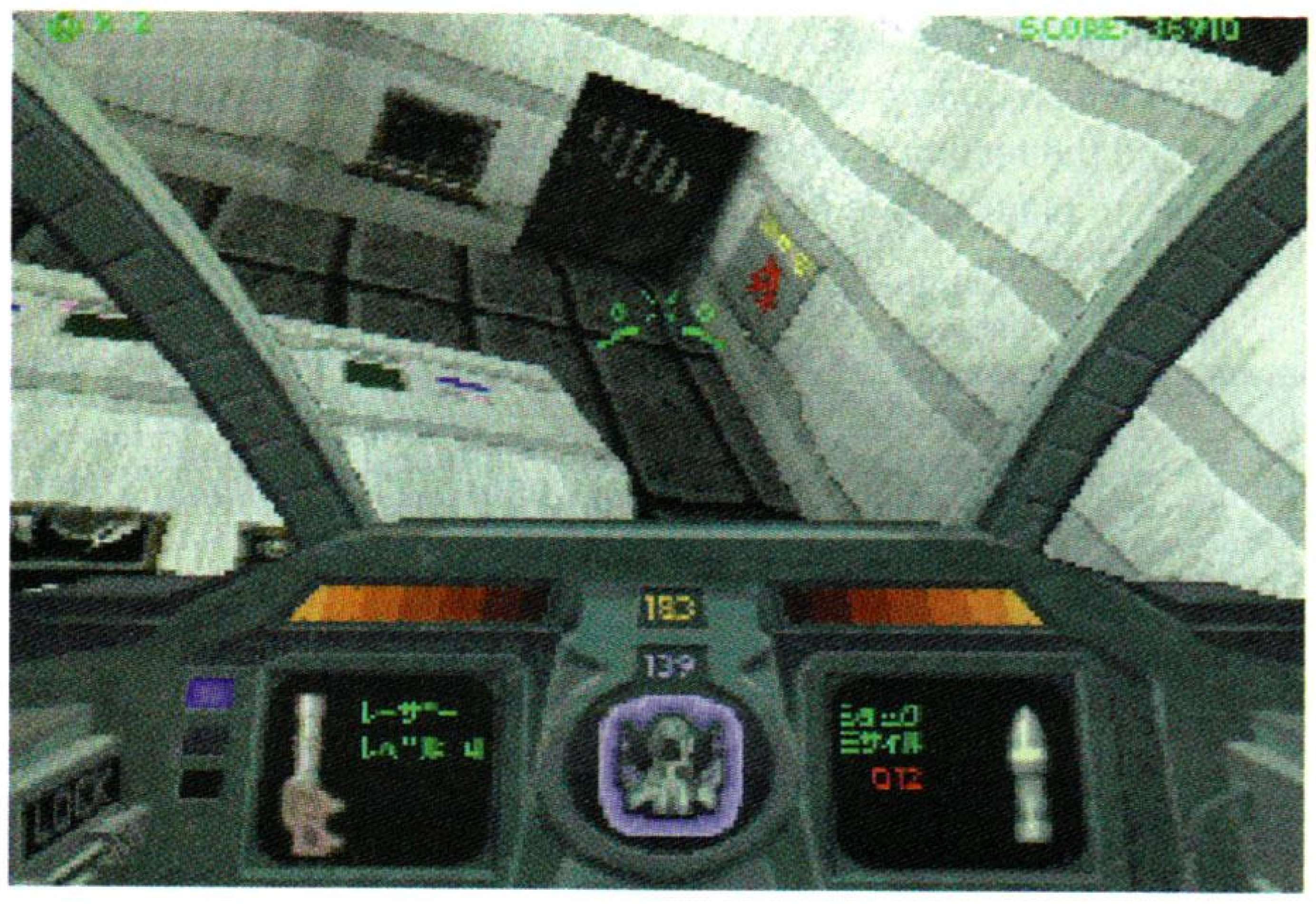
Released over half a year ago, the PC version of Descent was an instant world wide success, carving its own niche in the PC games market by being sufficiently different from 'Doom' to warrant the start of its own hybrid genre: the 360 degree shoot 'em up. In fact, for many gamers, Descent's immersive sense-spinning 360 degree environment was considered even more advanced than that of Id's seminal classic.

The objective on each level remains the same throughout the game: blast anything that moves, find the hostages, locate the red key, destroy the mine's central reactor and then get the hell out of there before the whole complex explodes taking you with it. The first few levels are fairly straightforward, with the exit from the mine being placed in the same room as the level's reactor, but as you progress to the later stages it becomes harder and harder to reach, resulting in some truly nerve wracking moments as you dash for the exit while the mine crumbles around you. This certainly makes for more interesting play than Doom's simple 'find the exit' level structure and contributes significantly to game's claustrophobic atmosphere.

In true shoot 'em up tradition Descent contains an impressive array of weapons that the player must put to good destructive use. Though initially your skimmer is only equipped with concussion missiles and twin low power lasers, as you progress through the game these can be powered up to level four quad blasters, in addition to the collection of other offensive joys such as the vulcan machine gun, spreadfire laser, plasma cannon, fusion generator, several types of missile and defensive proximity bombs. Also

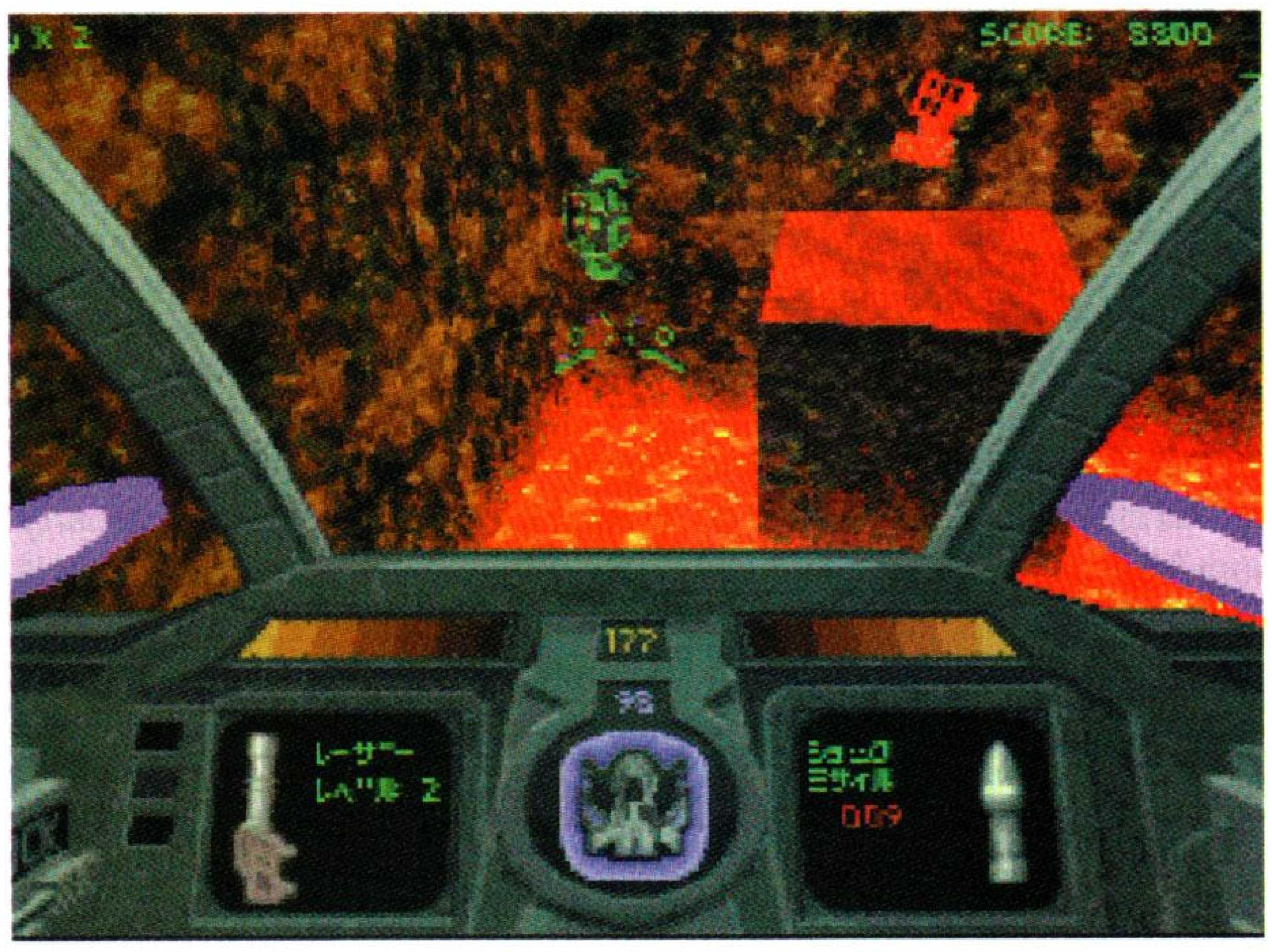
Interplay puts a 360 degree twist on the Doom genre!

How can you defeat enemies that learn strategies as you play?



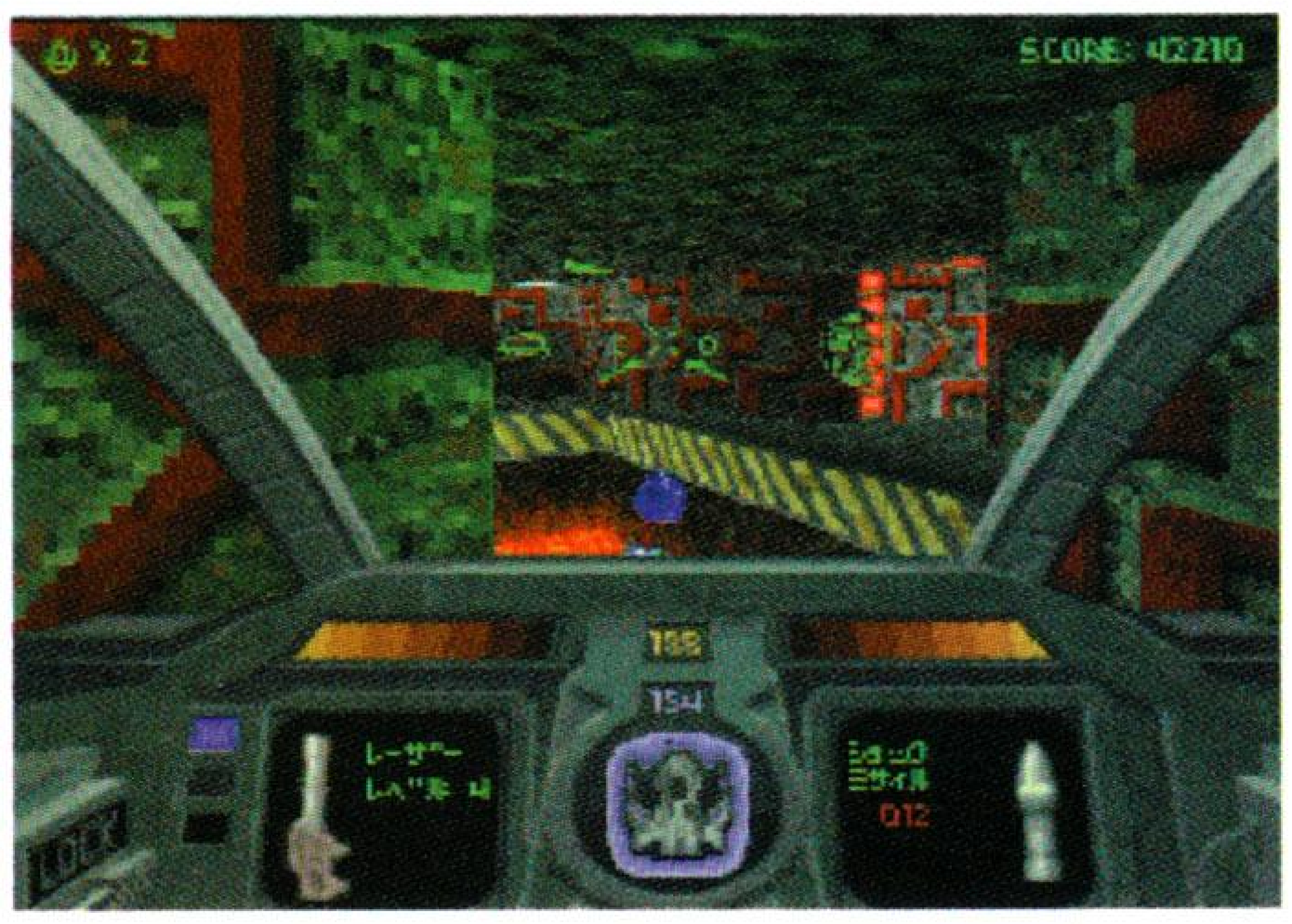
WEAPONRY OF DOOM!

Descent has all of the weapons of the PC original, including various lasers, explosive, missiles, bombs and vulcan cannons. With this lot, it's almost enjoyable as Doom.



strewn around the levels are various floating items that produce specific time based effects, such as periods of invulnerability or invisibility.

Despite this fine collection of ordinance, the odds are still stacked against the player. Even on the lower difficulty levels, Descent on the PC was incredibly hard going, and this is a quality the console translations look set to emulate. The game boasts an advanced level of artificial intelligence for its many hostile inhabitants, and Interplay are keen to point out that the enemies actually learn from their collective mistakes, adjusting their actions and strategy depending on your tactics. What this means is that although an alien robot may well chase after you and fly right into your laser fire the first time you encounter it, the next enemy you come across will stop and wait around the corner, just out of sight. Not nice. Fortunately, as with the PC version, the user has the option to save regularly, or, in the absence of a memory card, take down passwords.



MAXIMUM were worried about how the complex control system required to pilot the Descent skimmer would translate onto the Playstation pads but after preliminary play we're glad to report that things are looking very rosey indeed. The d-pad is used to angle the view of your craft, while the 4 main control buttons act as accelerate, reverse, strafe left and strafe right. The firing, rotating, and weapon selection is all activated from the shoulder pads. This may all sound like a bit of a nightmare, but in practice you'll soon be zooming around the mines blasting hordes of aliens while performing complex 360 degree evasive manoeuvres as homing missiles whizz around you.

The levels themselves, as far as we can tell, are carbon copies of their PC counterparts. This is no bad thing, as the originals were large, complex and riddled with secrets and deadly traps. To help the player cope with the bewildering 3D world of Descent, Interplay have added a revolutionary new auto mapping system that charts your progress on a fully manipulatable 3D wire graph model.Though how well this actually works is a matter of contention.

As with the levels, Descent looks and sounds almost identical to the PC version too, with the only real differences being the new techno soundtrack and high lightened 'Radiosity' lighting effects. Fire a flare down a darkened shaft and watch as the walls light up in green incandescence! The bulk of the levels and robots are impressively texture mapped too, with the real time light source shading producing some particularly nice effects. **MAXIMUM** were also pleased to discover that the game runs in full screen 'cockpit' mode at a decent pace, something that required a fairly powerful PC to accomplish.

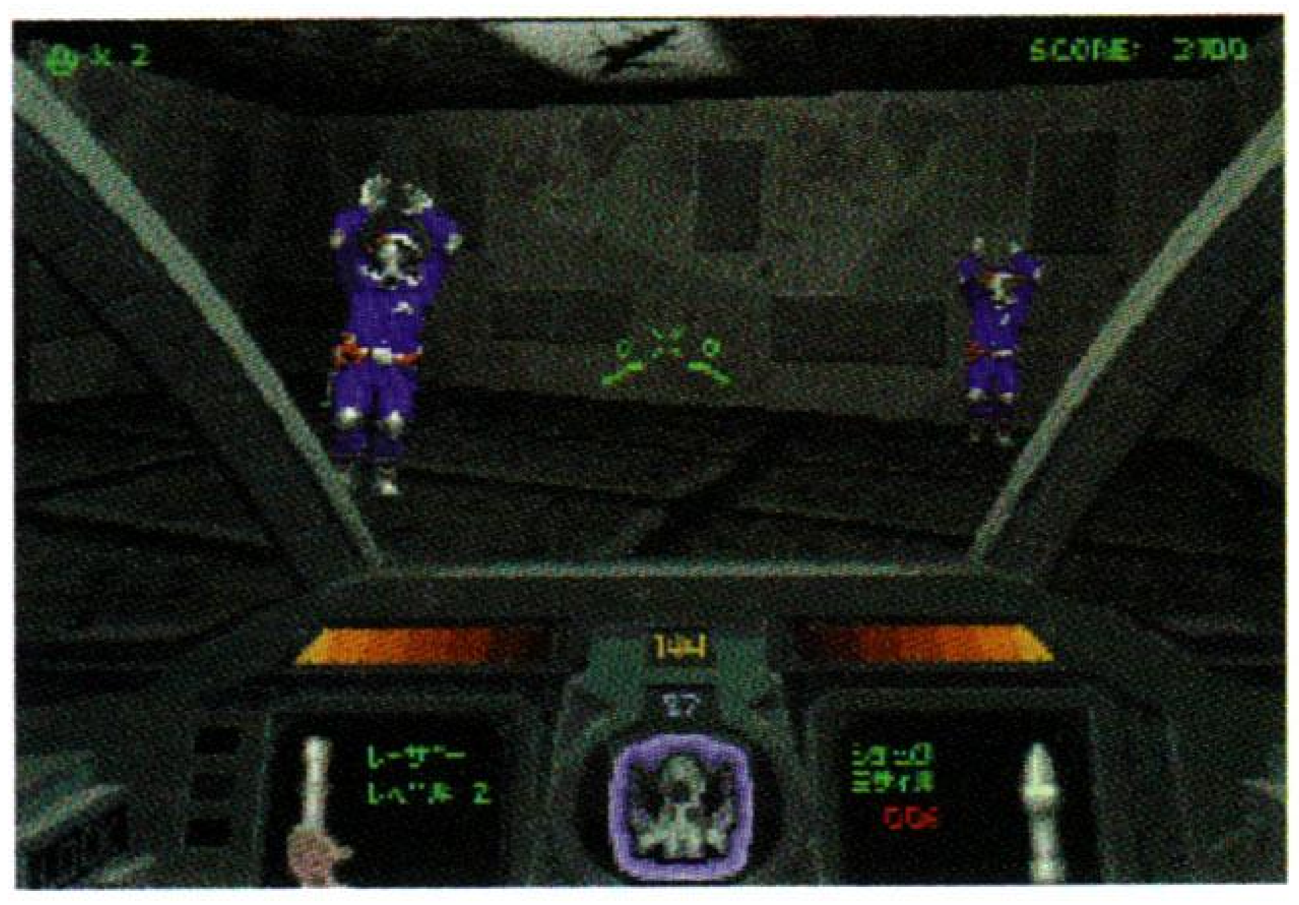
30 Levels of arcade action, with a pounding industrial rock score!

Perhaps the biggest reason for Descent's continuing PC popularity however, is its multiplayer mode. Like Doom, several players can link their machines together, by cable or modem, and play either co-operatively or head to head for some brilliant explosive multiplayer action. Descent is one of the few games that offers open entry (ie a player can join a game in progress at any time), which, through the use of games software like Kali, proved to be incredibly popular on the internet. Thankfully, the console conversions retains the ability to link-up, with both the options for head-to-head or cooperative play included, and Interplay have provided five entirely new 'Anarchy' levels exclusively for the console version.

Descent is shaping up to look like a mighty fine prospect for any Playstation owners looking for a first person perspective shooter with a bit of depth. It's a shame that Interplay have decided to convert the first Descent instead of its even better sequel, but who knows what the future holds. Still, Descent was brilliant on the PC and, fingers crossed, it looks set to be equally brilliant here. Whether the single player mission will stand the test of time, or whether the multiplayer battles will scale the heights of Doom, however, remains to be seen.

BLASTATHON!

The PC version of Descent had a very complicated control system and this has been translated extremely well on to PlayStation. This is certainly shaping up to be an excellent conversion.

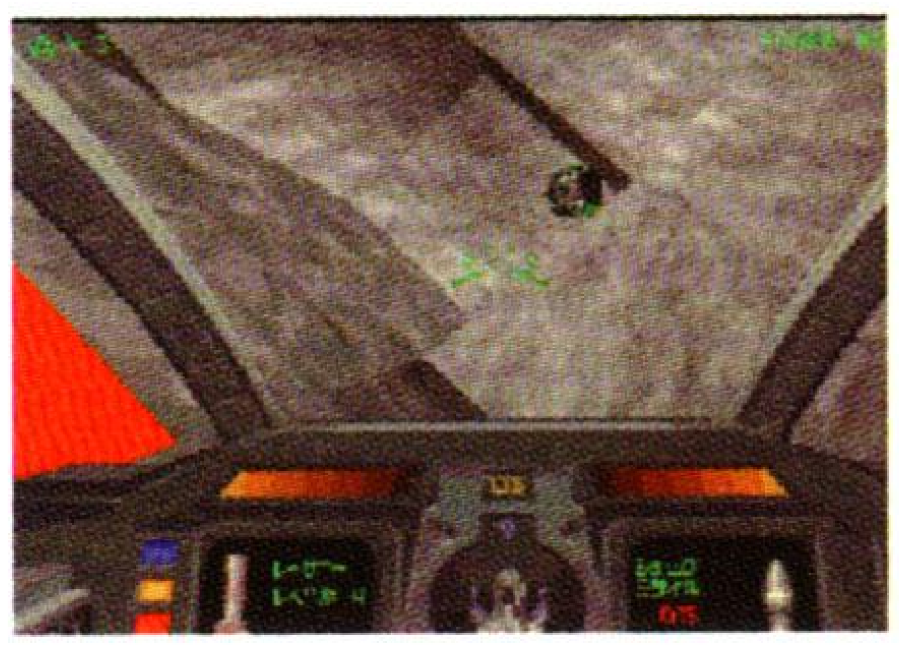


ATTENTION TO DETAIL!

Descent on the PlayStation appears to have all of the major graphical features of the PC version, although the frame rate (although good) doesn't match a top-end 486 PC in terms of speed.

LIGHT-SOURCING!

Like Doom, the Descent conversion benefits from some very nice lighting effects, as can be seen in the pictures surrounding this particular caption.

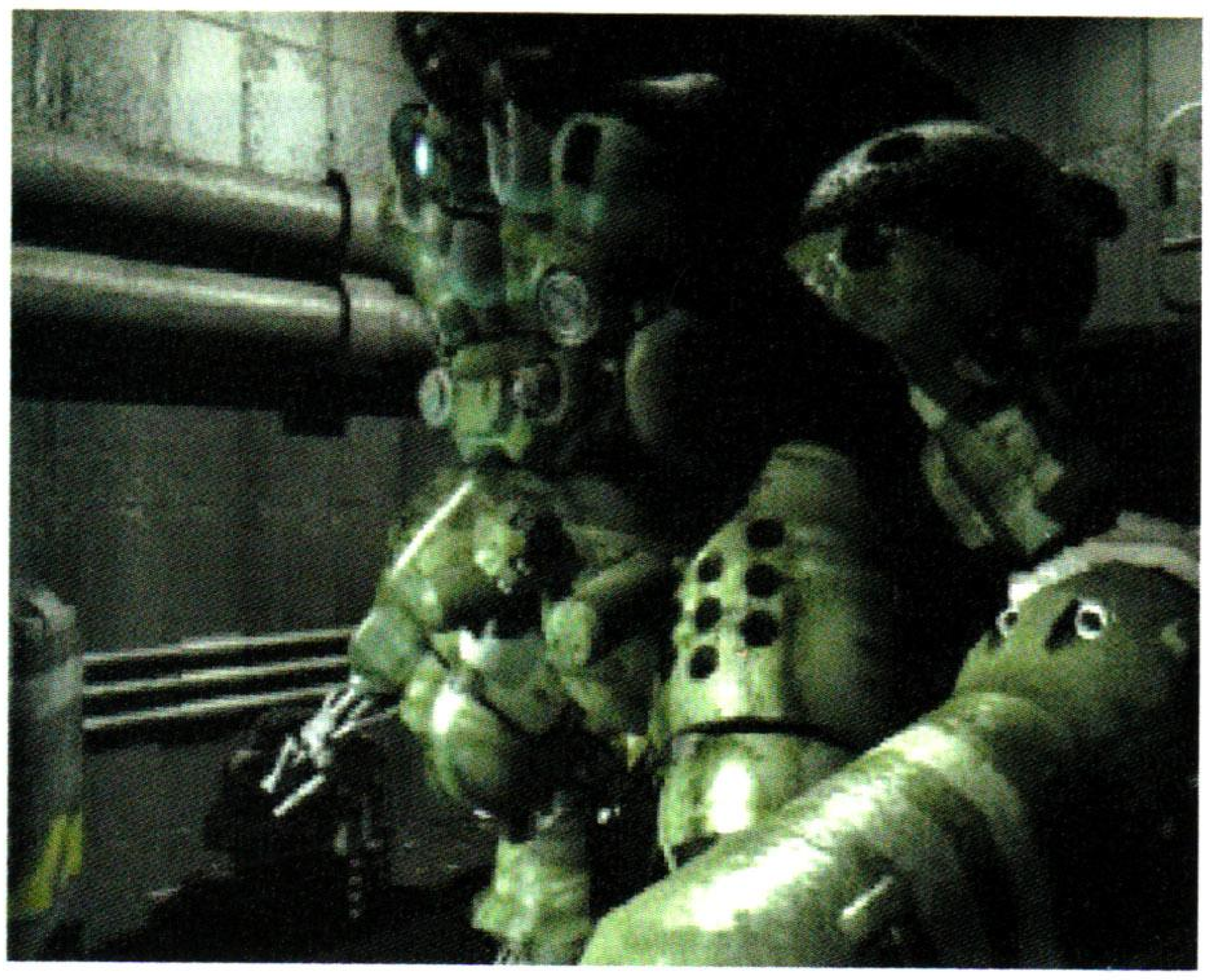


LINK-UP TOO!

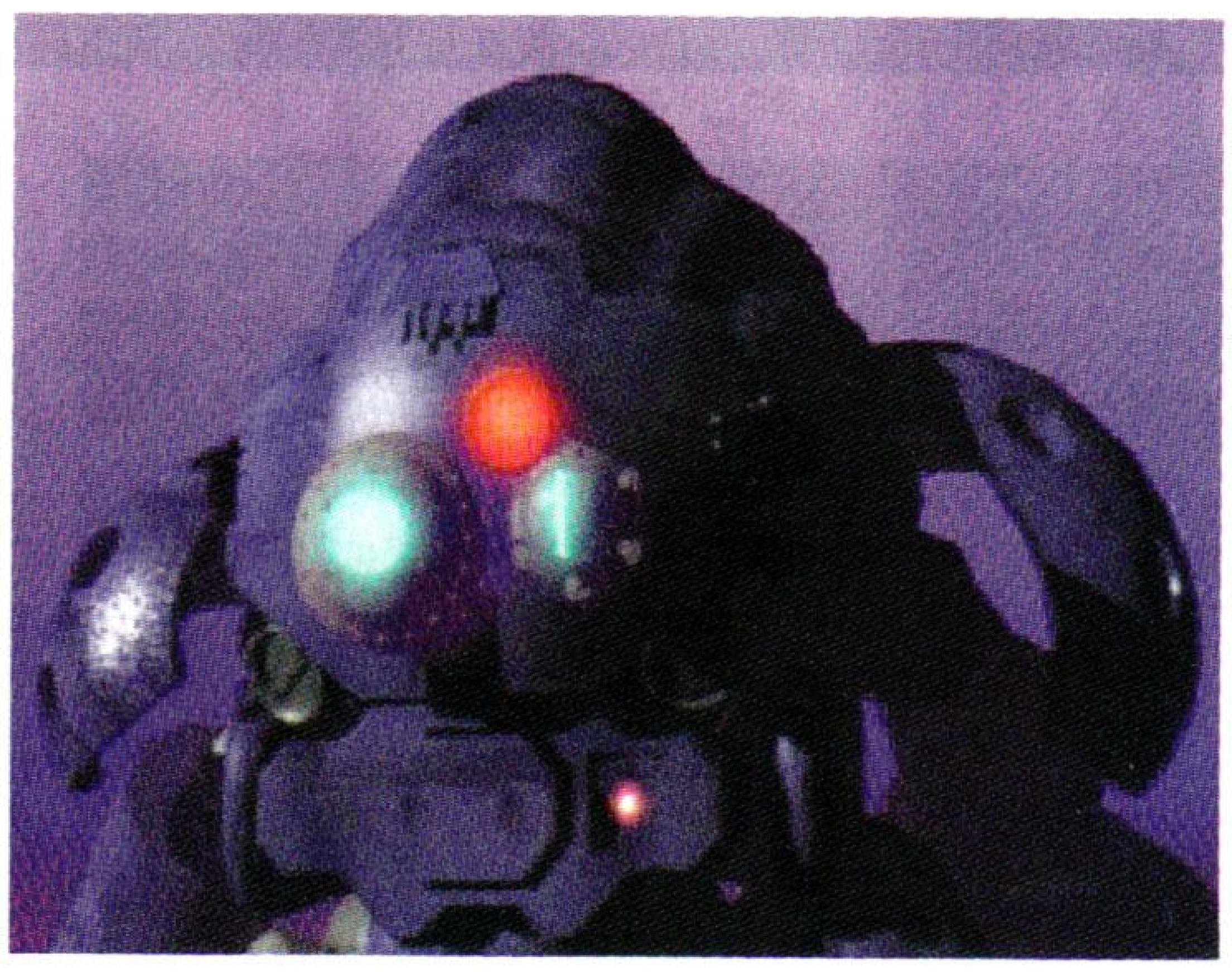
Continuing the comparisons to Doom, Descent has two different types of link-up mode which effectively mirror id's Deathmatch and Cooperative options. Excellent stuff.

A REASON FOR THIS MADNESS

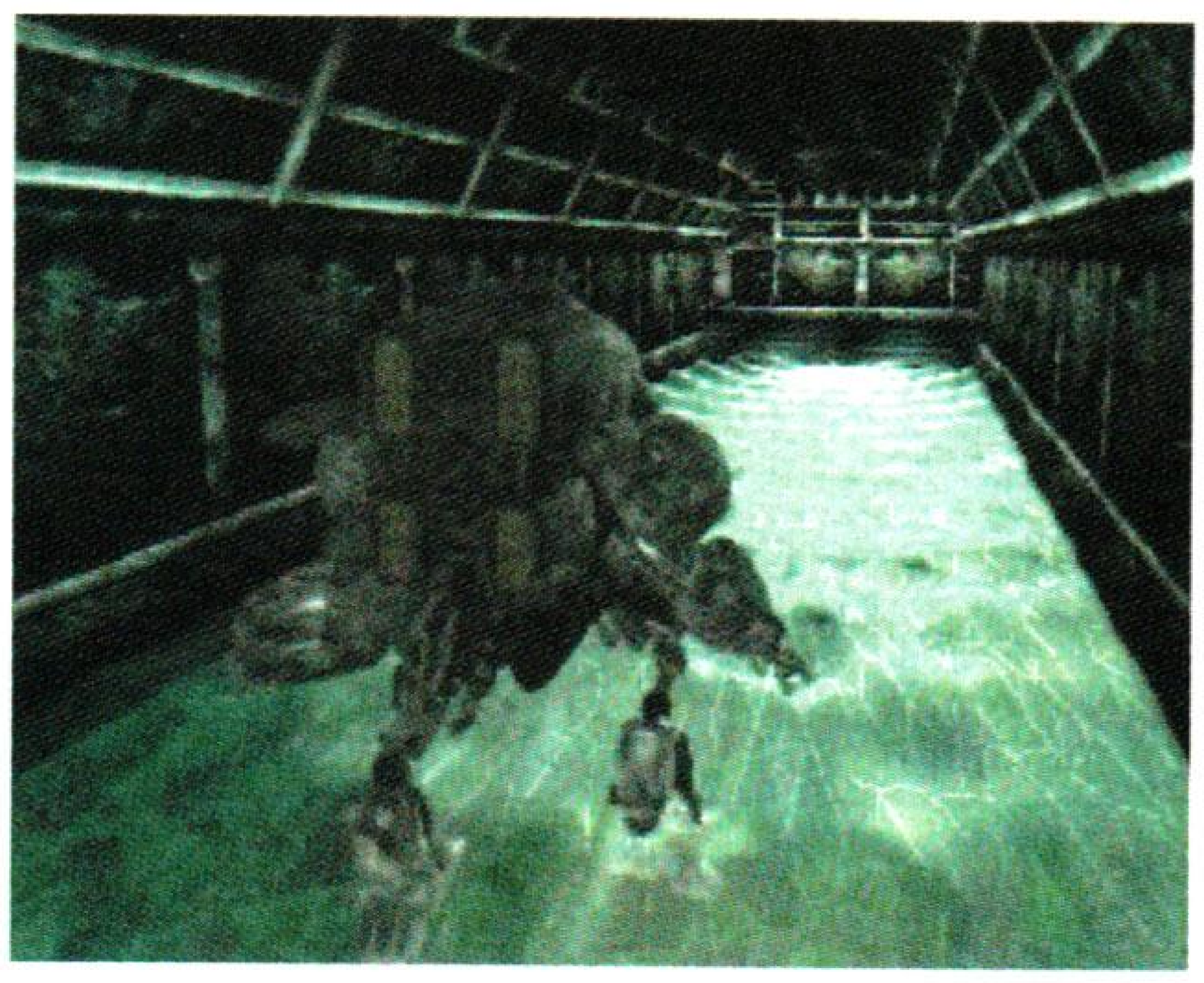
KILEAK, THE BLOOD 2



On December 29, Sony of Japan finally released the sequel to the first ever PlayStation 3D mission-based shoot 'em up. Kileak the Blood 2 promised more of the same smooth flowing action and puzzles, and early indications were that the team responsible had also attempted to iron out the deficiencies of the first game whilst improving the graphics considerably, and keeping the eye-catching rendered cut-scenes. Has Sony created a fine sequel with a greater visual feast and stunning sound, or is Kileak 2 simply a rehashed money-spinner?



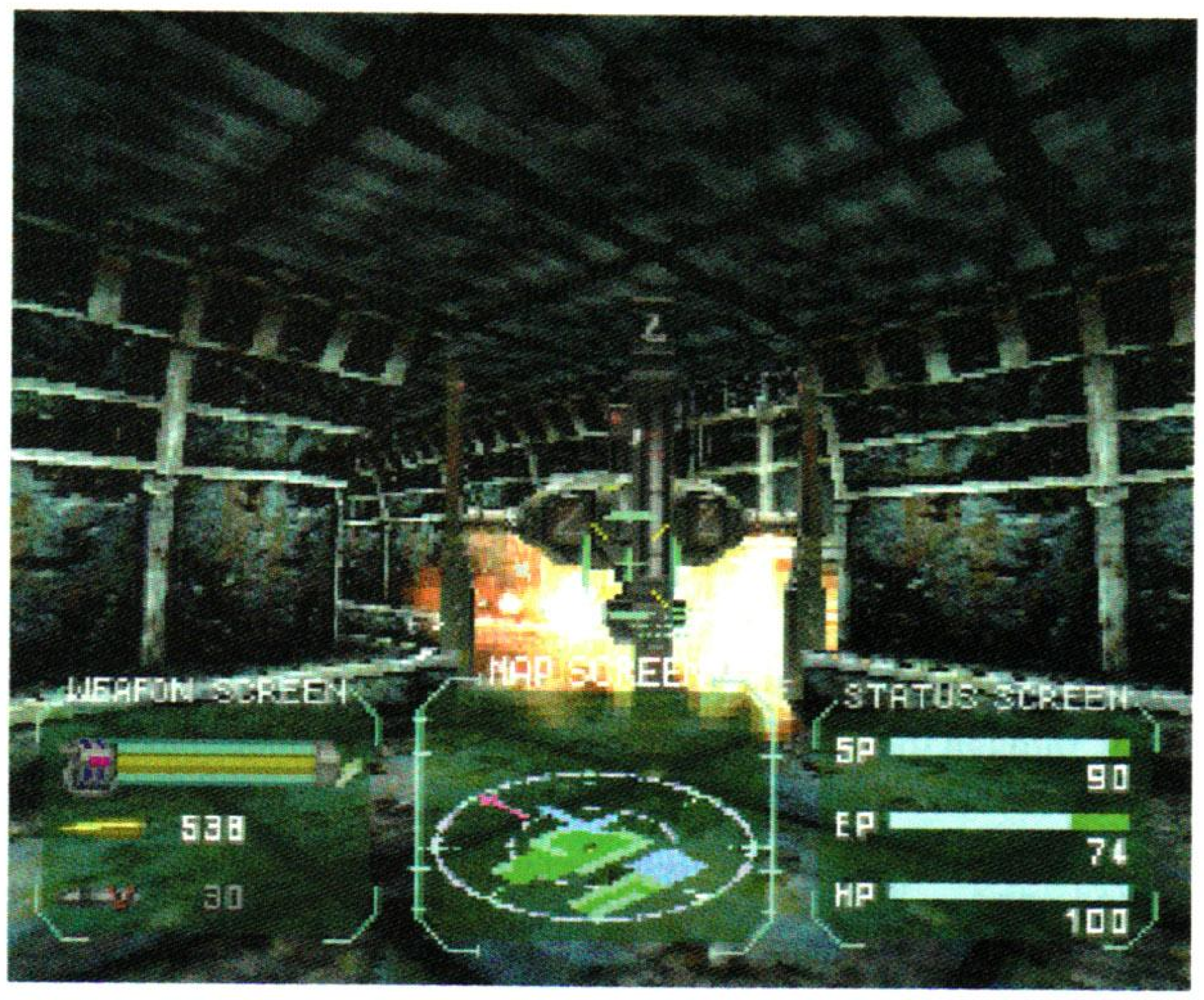
CG INTROS ARE AWESOME!
The quality of the rendered introduction sets the scene excellently for the exploration to come, with stunning use of the PlayStation's colour palette.



In setting the scene, the staff responsible for the introductory CG animated sequences have worked overtime to create a stunning futuristic metropolis where the action is based. In this Blade Runneresque cityscape, the combat specialist known as Masao must clamber into his "Protect Armour SJ 107R" in an almost impossible mission to save his partner and lover, the dying Leila. After this introduction Masao receives a brief explanation of the Armour's main improvements, and is ready to tackle the mission objectives competantly. These objectives are to destroy any enemy robots or mechs encountered whilst trudging through the various combat zones, and further information is obtained from the numerous cut-scenes. Not only is this rendered film a joy to observe, but it is also integral to the plot as it contains clues to the following arena, and the main portions of the film can even be played back via video walls located in the levels themselves. Unfortunately, the Japanese speech hinders any fathoming of clues for the Western gamer.

The plot synopsis follows the disaster encountered by Masao; the finest operative in the anti-goverment group known as 'DelSol'. After previous terrorist work, Masao is relaxing with his mistress when she is suddenly struck down with the terrible 'Gigali' virus. Suitably worried, Masao discovers through his contacts that the only antidote is the 'Rufless' flower and sets about to find it. Battling through the elements, the flower is found, and must be brought back to save the ailing Leila as the levels increase in difficulty and a new 'Protect Armour' suit is located.

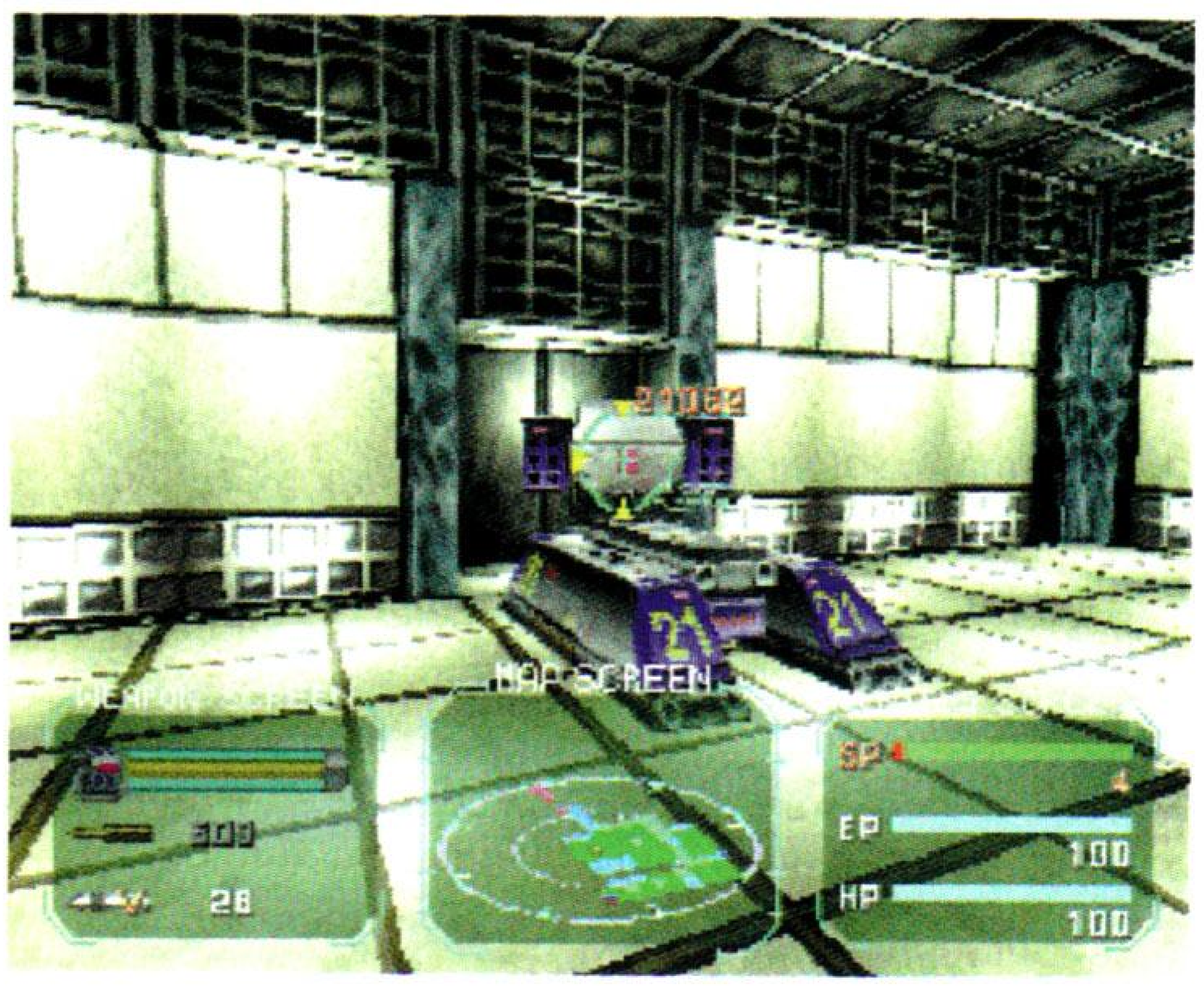
The quality of the 3D graphics engine is in no doubt!
A struggle through sewers and skyscrapers to search for that serum!



SENTINEL DESTRUCTION!
The rapid-fire chain-gun attachment for your suit provides the best way to take out the various guardians in the game. Remember to move and strafe with expert timing, and gun these robots' sensitive areas!

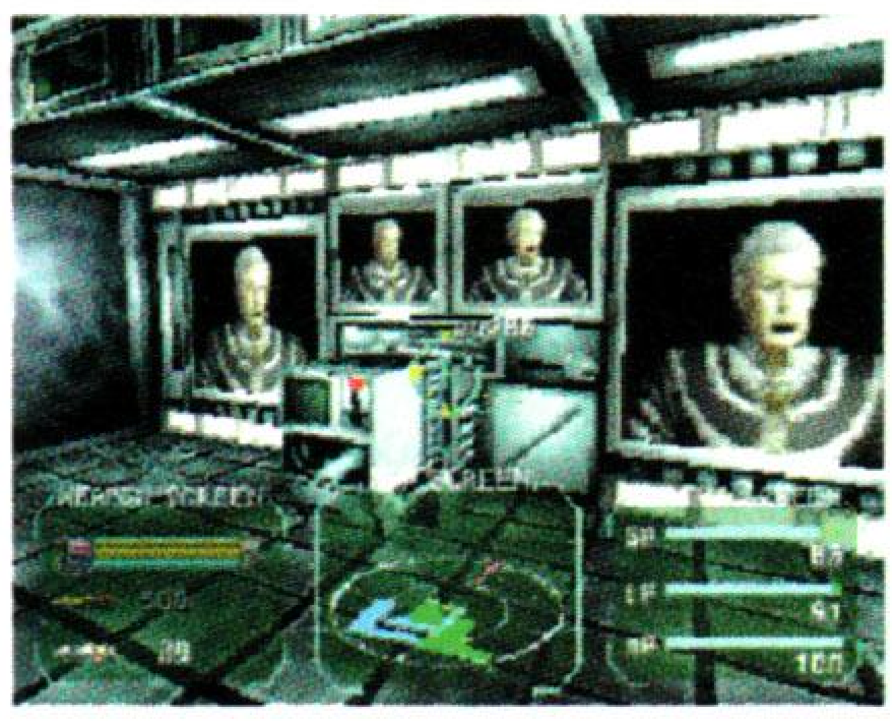
MAXIMUM has exhaustively playtested the entire game and has found it to be a compelling and involved exploration, but with a number of problems that regrettably prevent it from obtaining an unequivocal **MAXIMUM** recommendation. What it does offer is a number of mission-based scenarios that are laid out in a similar manner to the first Kileak title, with the action relying a lot more on puzzle-solving rather than executing the robot enemies with a Doom-style vigour. This is definitely for thinking types rather than those craving constant streams of enemy attacks.

Kileak has many excellent additions that add greatly to illusion of being strapped inside a hulking robotic exo-skeleton. The suit itself moves beautifully about the levels and is supremely controllable, with the player being able to side-step, dash and change through weapons extremely quickly and easily thanks in no small part to the PlatStation pad. It may well be next to useless for executing fireballs in Street Fighter Zero, but the extra shoulder buttons allow fantastic freedom of movement.



As well as being a joy to operate, this robotic suit (and the advanced prototype model which you may control in later missions) has a vast array of on-board sensors which indicate armaments carried, map location and general status of the suit's protective outer shielding. An added feature is that any or all of the sensors may be switched off, giving the player an uncluttered full-screen field of vision. The three sensor readings are well laid out, and the mapping feature is particularly impressive. A final set of sensor nodules

WEAPON SCREEN
MAP SCREEN
STATUS SCREEN

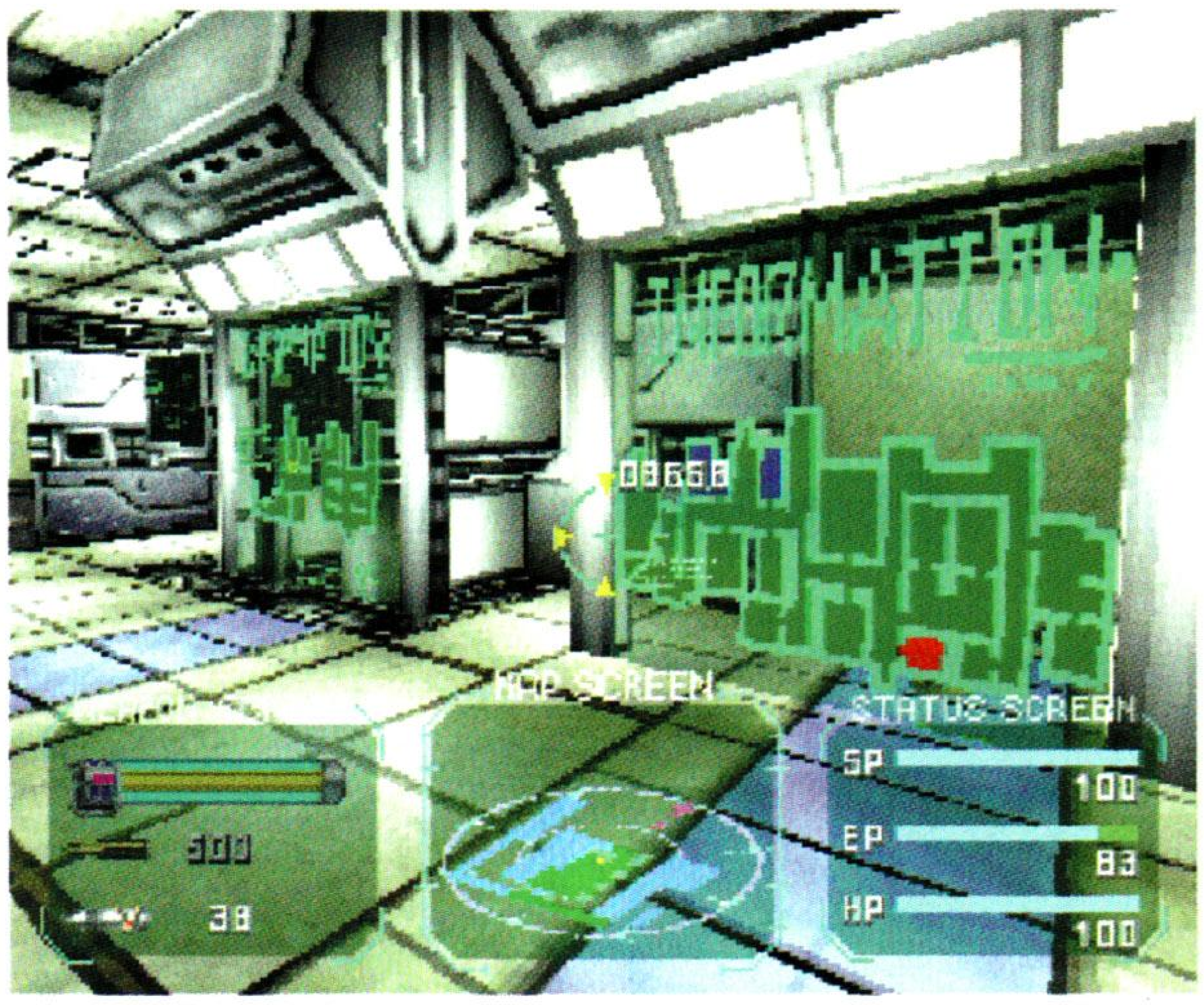


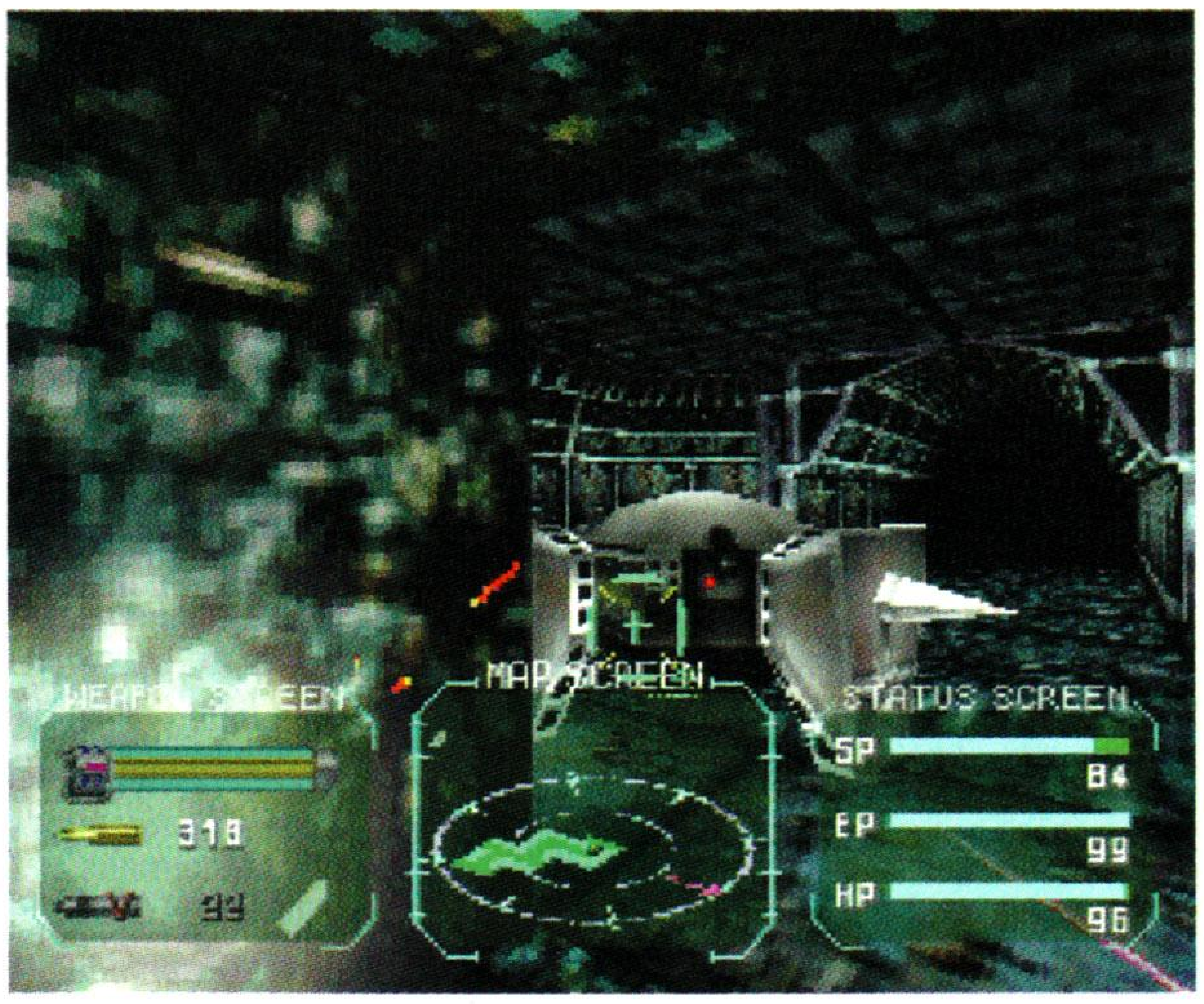
inform you of any additional information, and this is explained by a soothing robotic female Japanese voice whilst a graphical representation of the information appears where the map usually resides. A final nice touch are the accompanying sound effects, ranging from the stomping mech feet to the gurgling of sewer water, all of which is rounded off with an atmospheric (rather than an imposing) soundtrack.

The problems with Kileak 2 stem from the failings of the previous title. **MAXIMUM** found the enemy robots encountered to be widely-spaced, few and far between and graphically mediocre, whilst the sentinel guards (large and more impressive robots with their own CG introduction and death) were a pushover once their weakness had been discovered. Despite the lengthy aimless wanderings, the whole game was concluded far too quickly, and the final enemy is something of an anti-climax. We completed the game over the course of two days, which gives you an indication of the ease and lack of levels, but we did enjoy ourselves during our explorations, despite the odd half hour of anguish at the numerous Japanese announcments and confusing levels.

This is a considerable improvement over the first Kileak, and features some of the most impressive 3D movement ever (coupled with the excellent rendered film that pushes the plot along). The missions are fairly entertaining, but the advesaries and lack of challenge left us somewhat unfulfilled.

Watch the CG graphics for hints on how to defeat the stage guardians! Only a few hours gameplay and the end sequence is yours!





MISSION GUIDE

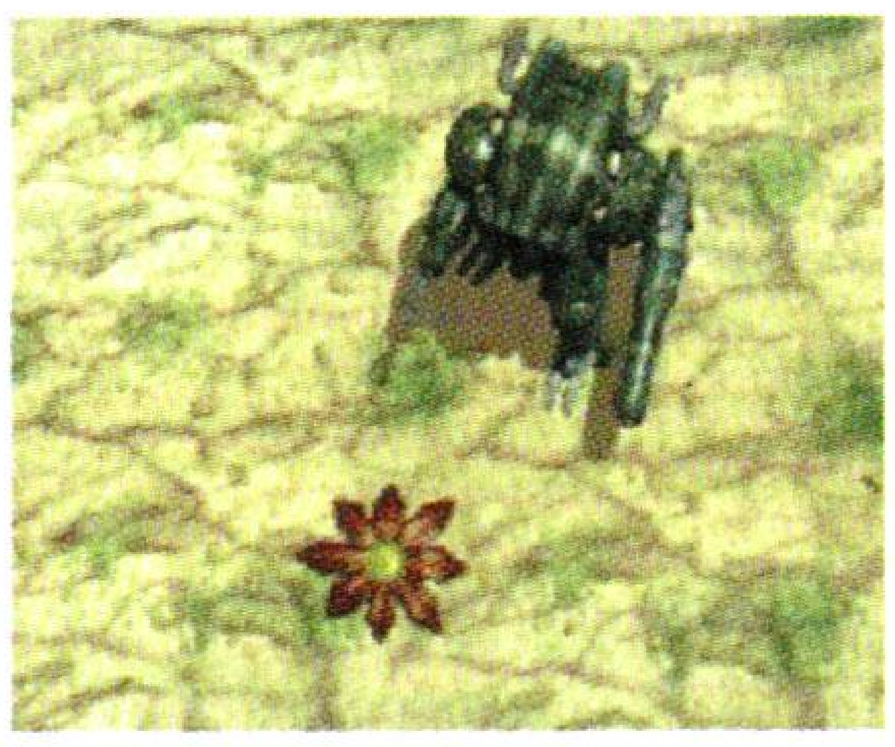
Anyone considering buying an import copy of Kileak 2 may find the large amount of Japanese speech somewhat bewildering. In order to help you through the first couple of missions, we've decided to provide hints on the first two levels to help you in your quest for that antidote.

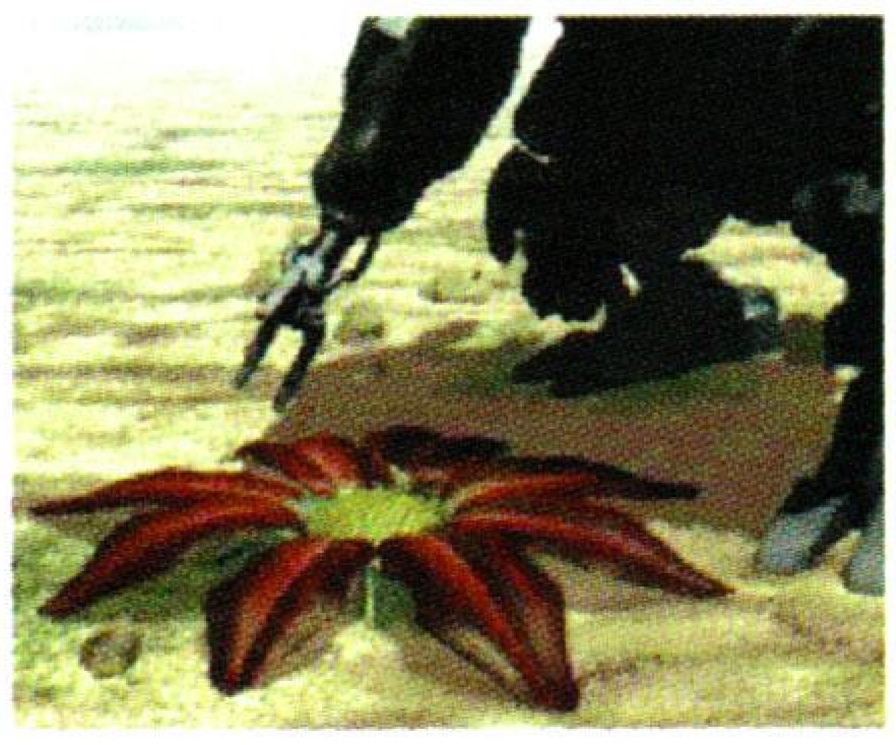
MISSION 1: INFORMATION CENTRE

In this initial level, Masao must obtain the Master ID card in oder to progress. You begin on the second floor of the centre (2F), but to proceed onwards, you'll need to find the lift that transports you to the first floor. Once you've arrived, travel to a large central room with three computer terminals located on the right-hand wall. Each terminal has a light which can be flicked, and changes to a choice of three colours. Flick all the colours to blue, and the doorways with blue surrounding swing open (and this is confirmed by the holo-map in the terminal room). Use the holo-map to locate the blue doors, and explore within them, before returning to the main room, and flicking all three switches to red, before investigating further. By releasing all three coloured doors, as code card with four permutations can be obtained, and a room in the western part of the complex holds a blue keycard. Search for the main contol room which has four different switches and a locked dispensor. Arrange the icons in the same pattern as the code card, and the dispensor opens to reveal the Master ID card. Phase one is now complete!

MISSION 2: SALAVISA

The main city tower that houses the flower is known as Salavisa. Mission two takes place over three floors, and the search should commence at B2F. Search the area until you uncover a narrow passageway to a sewer passage blocked by rocks. Travel to the north and locate the 'float mines', and use them to destroy the blockage. Some other walls may be demolished in a similar way. An 'Unknown Alloy' is hidden in a western chamber, but you should idealy be speeding to another area for a confrontation with 'Hydrotalon RR'; an enemy sentinel who is engaging another dreadnought suit - this one is controlled by your chum; Thunders. Use machine-gun fire to take out the sentinel, and clamber into the lift. Descend and head south to turn the lights on, and flick anything else remotely switch-like. The usual switch frenzy should end with a confrontation with a sentinel called the Pit Breeder (who may be imobilised when the top portion of his hood is open), before a doorway to the outside can be opened. Breating a sigh of relief, you obtain the flower-based antidote. Now comes the hard bit; you've got to return back to base and destroy the source of the virus!





'RUFLESS' FLOWER FOUND!
The climax of the second mission has Masao facing this spinning sentinel (below). After the explosions, the suited hero enters the outside world to find the flower.

WEAPON SCREEN
MAP SCREEN
STATUS SCREEN
SP
0
EP
94
HP
76
520

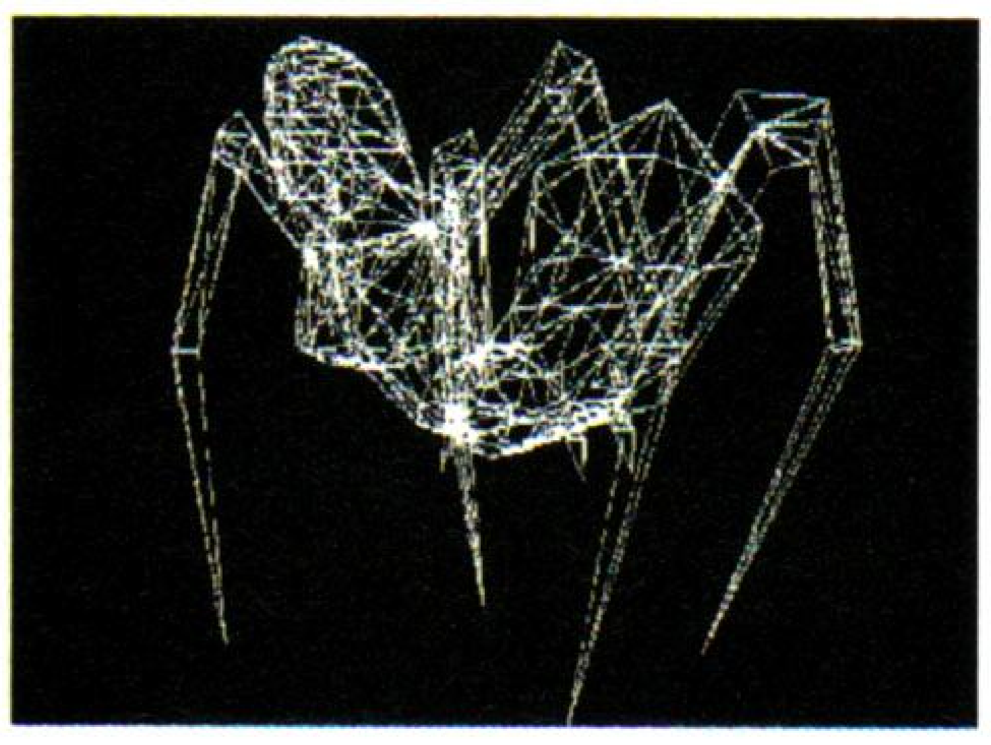
MAXIMUM NEWS

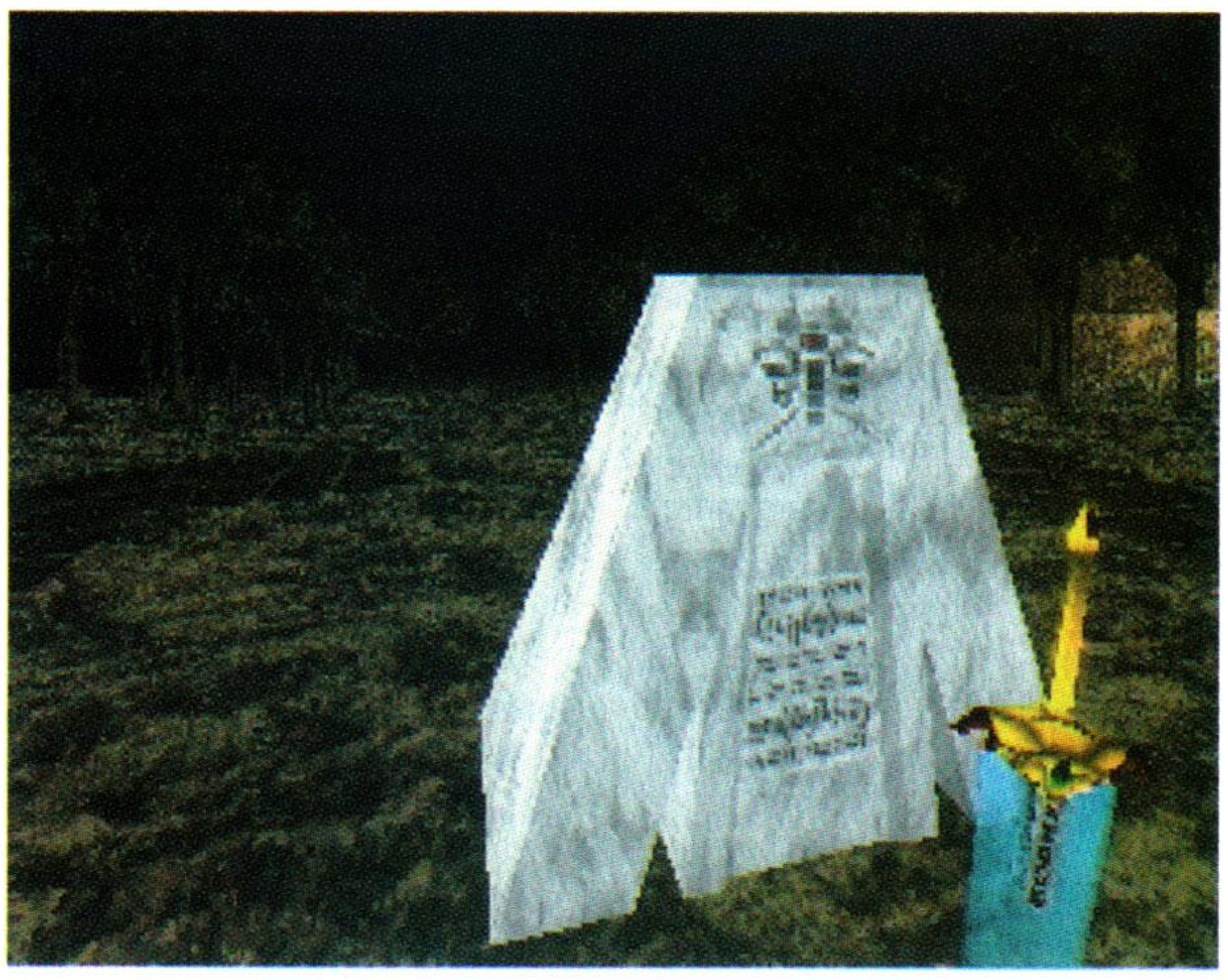
PS FROM

THE BEST PLAYSTATION RPG IS BACK!
KING'S FIELD 3
AVAILABLE IN **JAPAN** IN MAY '96

RETURN TO THE KILLING FIELDS

KING'S FIELD 3





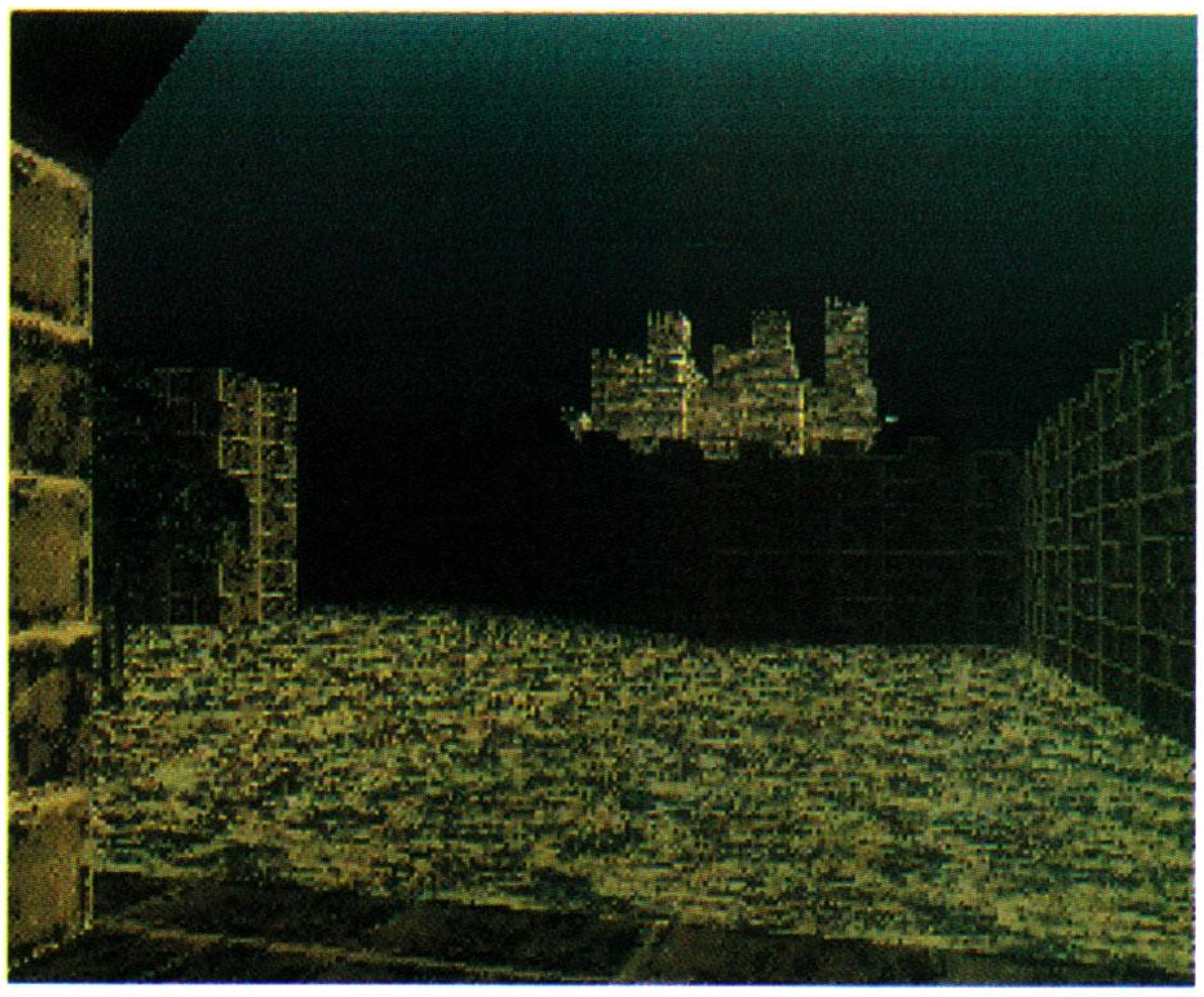
The undoubted popularity of the King's Field series of 3D polygon-based role-playing games in Japan has been further boosted by the news of the third installment. Previewed last issue, King's Field 3 is set to become the PlayStation's most eagerly awaited adventure title when it receives a Japanese release in May this year. Utilising the power of the PlayStation's 3D game engine, the team of developers at From Software are expected to sculpt an even more impressive-looking 32-bit visual feast along with a highly taxing role-playing element in an attempt to create the most involving, graphically breathtaking, and intriguing King's Field quest yet seen.

Those of you unfamiliar with previous events in the lands of the King's Field should take note of our potted histories in the short stories section, as King's Field 3 follows on in the same tradition. Immediately after the second King's Field sage, Jan and Alexander are seen resting after some monumental questing, uneasily celebrating the peace that had enveloped the land, still aware of the lurking presence of two unknown powers. Five year passed, and a festival was held to mark the period of peace and goodwill. Speeches were made, and the general agreement was a continuation of peace throughout the lands.

A week later, a burst of supernatural lightning struck the King's palace, and soon afterwards Jan fell gravely ill, and remained in a fevered and comatose state for months. Suddenly, Jan's wracked body jolted upright, and he recovered from the mystery ailment to to the relief of the population. However, his temperament changed, and he began to behave like a man possessed; persecuting his advisers and actively encouraging the new demonic incursions. Verdite was on the verge of collapse.

Alexander returned shortly afterwards and immediately formed the impression that Jan was being controlled by another being. He battled to Jan's throne and desperately attempted many forms of exorcism, but was driven back by the frothing King. A challenge to a death duel with Jan was next attempted, but only the Moonlight Sword could deal damage, and that power had dulled. Alexander resolved (with the help of the King's five attendants) to use the little power left in the sword to seal the King in his castle.

Explore vast valleys and huge caverns in the largest King's Field yet!
A titanic quest to combat the destructive force of demons!



EXAMINE MYSTICAL MAPS!
A small portion of the overland gaming area is revealed for the first time (above), and shows vast areas of forests and fields to explore. Also on show is one of the many new (and highly detailed) castle structures. From Software also promise larger buildings with greater detailing and much more complex layout.

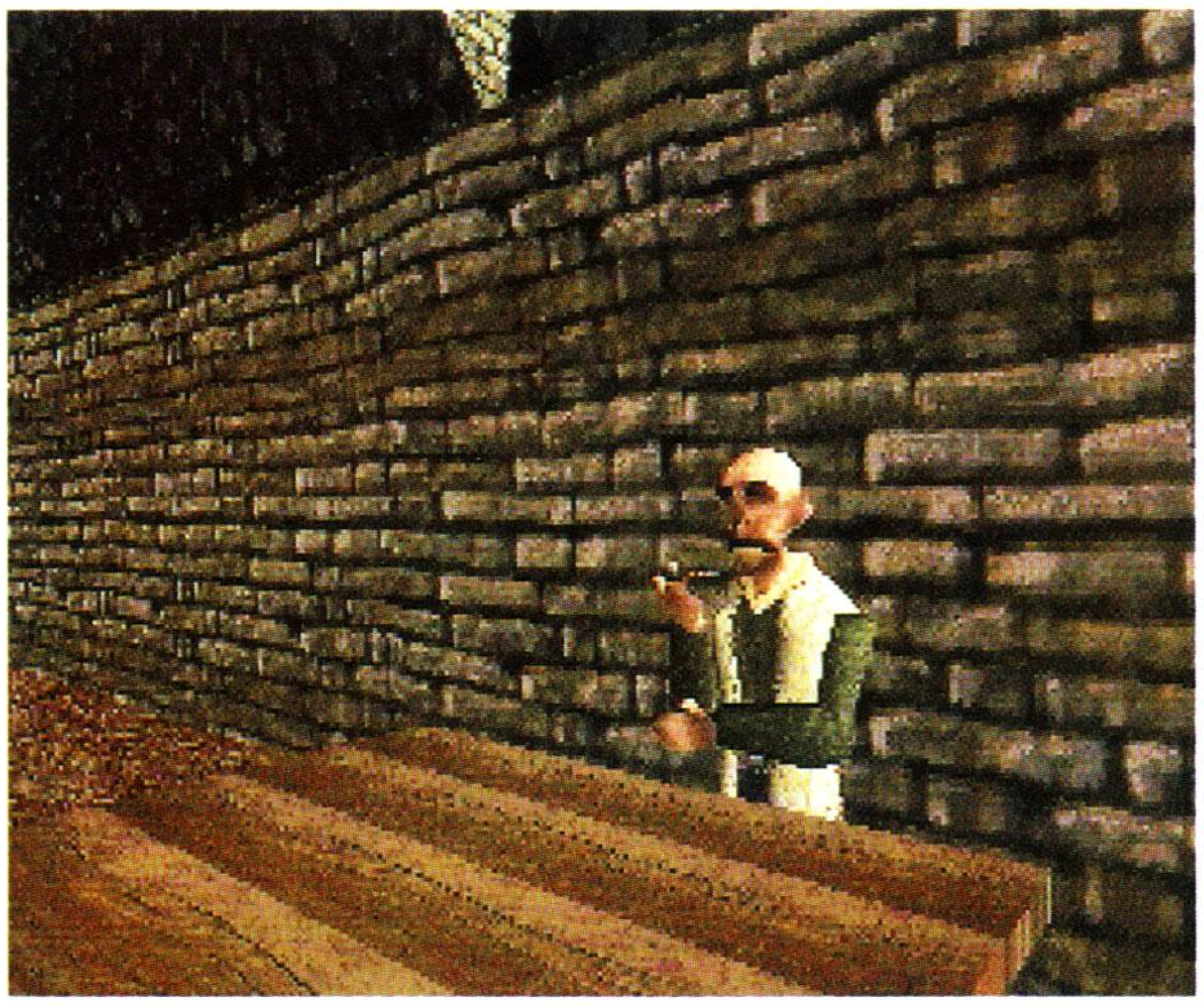
At the summoning circle on a sacred hill near to the palace, Alex fused his being with the elements to become the magician of pure light, and channelled energy into the Moonlight sword. White shards of light danced about the palace walls, whilst screams of agony echoed from within. The King was now unable to escape, but this imprisonment had cost Alexander dearly. Before leaving his physical form Alex's final act was to speak with Jan's son, Ryle, who was told of a new destiny; it was he who would lead Verdite back into peaceful prosperity.

Rampaging demons reappeared in Verdite and overran the once-peaceful land, whilst the young Ryle and his family were taken into the care of Leon, High Elf crystal maker. Verdite gradually fell into ruin, and the people fled to neighbouring lands to escape the demonic presence. Years later, Leon

With expectant gamers across America readying themselves for a translation of the second King's Field offering, we thought we would shed a little light on the background to this epic adventure. The scene is the small country of Verdite located in the northern part of a great and wide land mass known as the World of Illusion. Verdite itself is a somewhat magical place, covered by continuously rolling mists and shrouded by a great and sacred forest. At this time, a powerful and spiritual family came to govern over the lands over a corrupt and evil royal family, and the King's Field trilogy records the many trials and tribulations faced by these rulers.

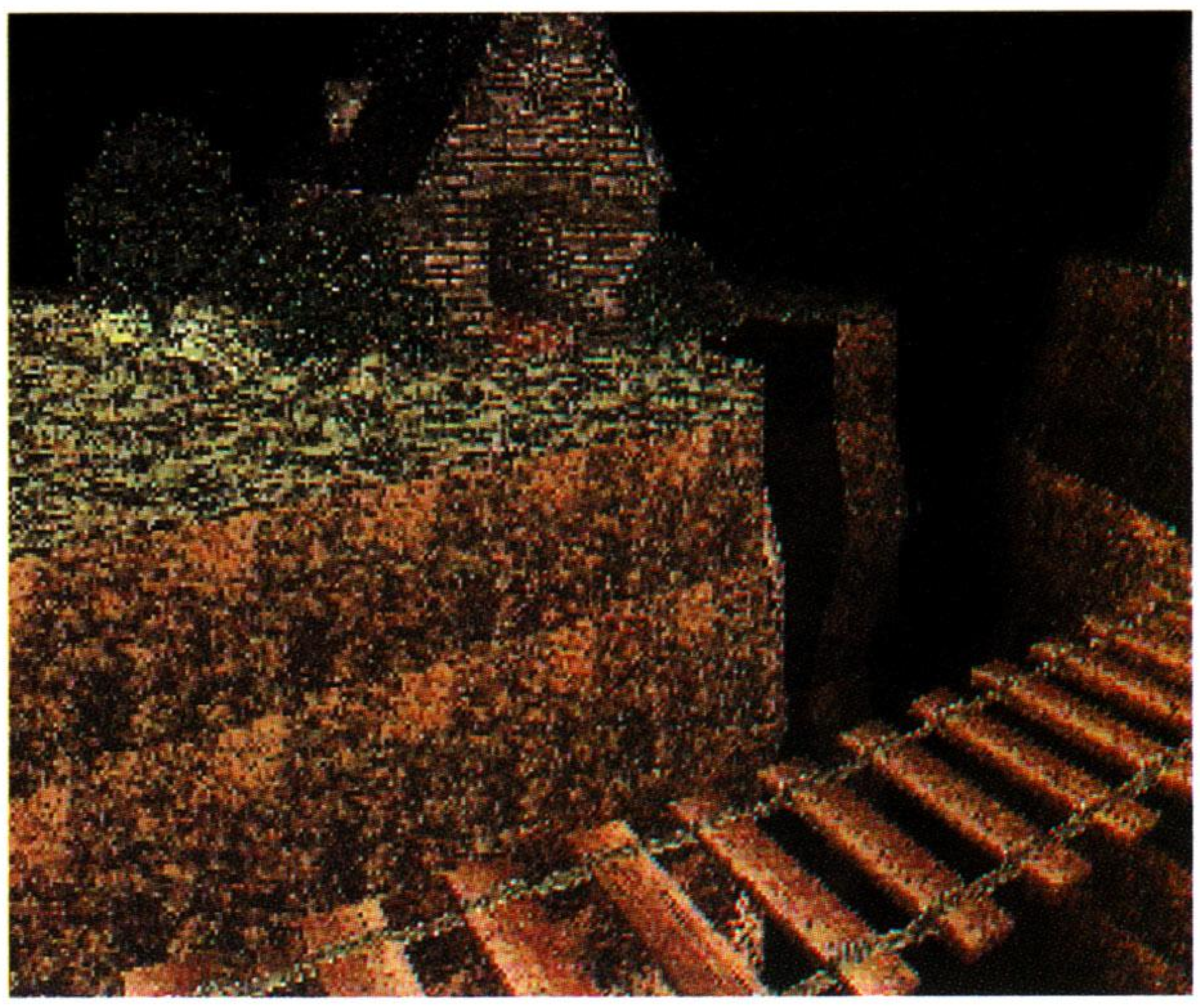
KING'S FIELD 1

In times of legend and lore, a most sacred shrine was used as the final resting place of the past rulers, and chronicles suggest that magical weapons were buried with them. The Dragon Shrine was subsequently ransacked by marauding demons until the time of the first King's Field saga, when these demonic intrusions began again and spirited away the chief bodyguard of the Continental Swordsmen; a man known as Hauser Forrester. Hauser's son, Jan, heard of his father's disappearance from a neighbouring country, and returned from combat training to search the tomb. Alas, his father could not be saved, and Jan discovered another, and even more hideous truth; the King of the land was in league with the forces of evil. Facing overwhelming odds, Jan chanced upon a sword left by his father, and upon closer inspection this was found to possess the supernatural energy of yore. He channelled this power and destroyed the demon King.



judged that Ryle's training was complete. He sat the young warrior down and placed a well-crafted short sword next to him. The magic contained in the new sword would help Ryle in his mammoth quest; to eradicate the new menace before the whole of the world was destroyed by demons. Ryle leaves the Elven stronghold on a solitary quest; and his adventure is chronicled in the third King's Field game.

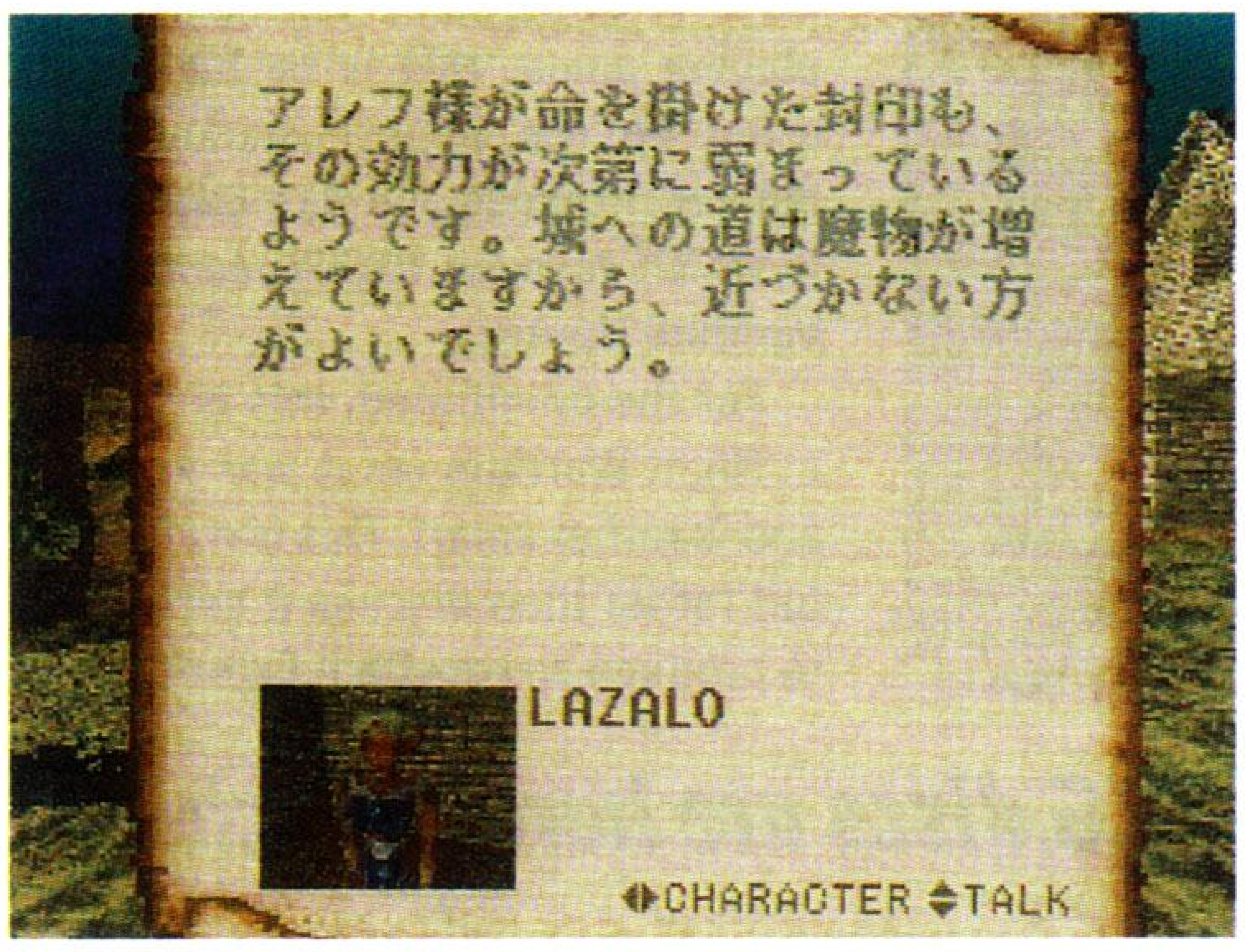
Moving on to the game structure itself, it appears (as ever) in polygon form, but movement around the various zones has been made faster and more fluid. Meetings with other non-player characters (such as the merchant) are also now more user-friendly, and these conversations can be recalled at any point. The now-famous 'get in and hack' approach to combat has been further redefined, as evading combat is simpler than KF2 and the actual melee battles have been balanced so that old hands may employ previously-learned tricks, and newcomers can learn the basics without being cut to ribbons. The major criticism of King's Field 2 was the very tough opening stage with most players giving up due to the unforgiving combat system and rock hard monsters. This has been tweaked allowing the player more scope for trail and error so the opening fights of King's Field 3 should be a lot easier. Magic has also been upgraded and is possible to use it as the main weapon right from the start of the game.



A CAST OF THOUSANDS!
The third King's Field saga features more characters than ever before, such as the shifty-looking innkeeper (above) and a strange chap with overly-large ears (top left).

Trek through a fabulously detailed and dangerous outdoor environment! Make no mistake - this is set to be the most exciting King's Field quest ever!

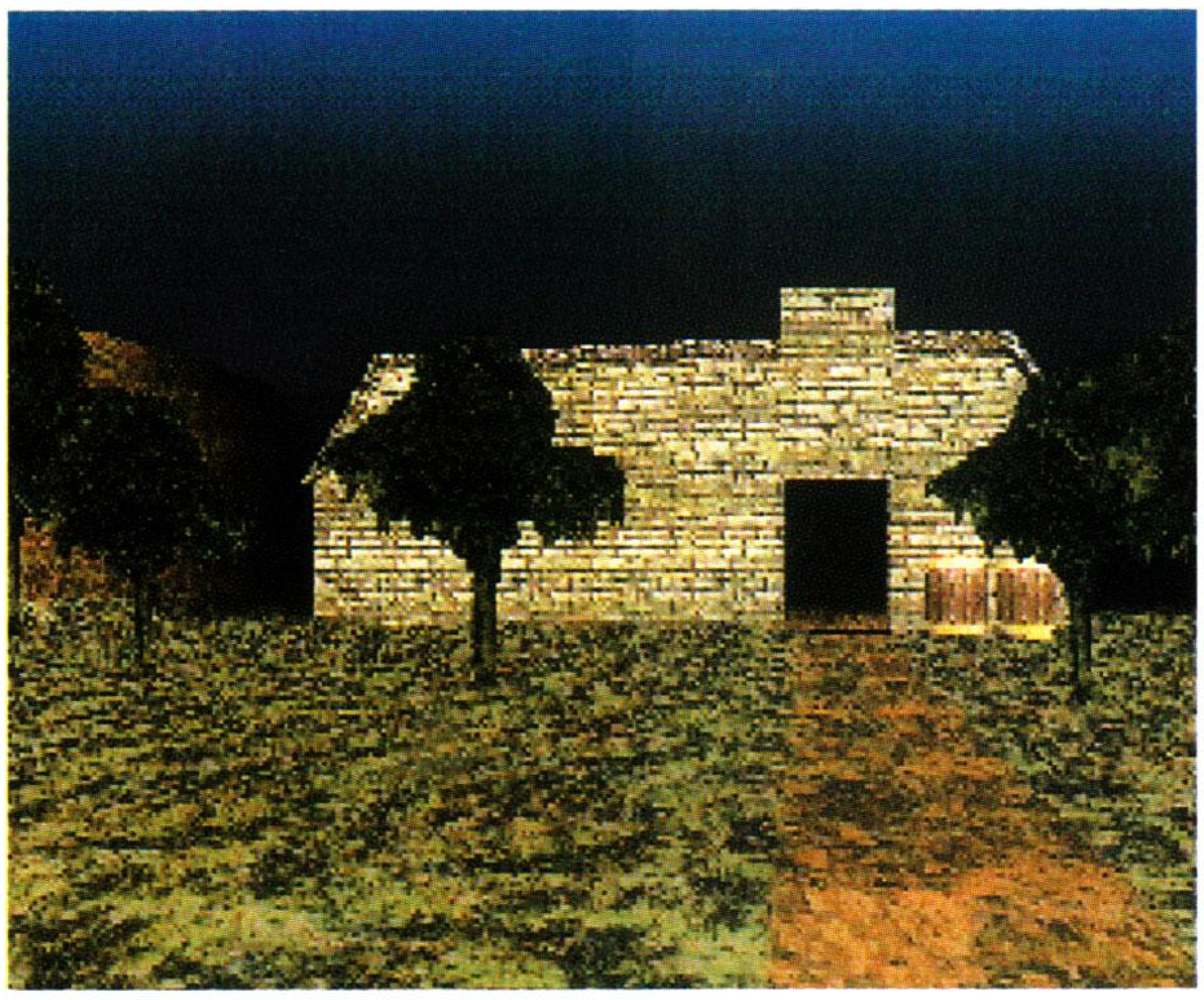
Other areas of the game have come under scrutiny. Previously, the healing of hit points was straightforward whilst magic point renewal required powerful items, and this method of recovery has been kept (along with the crystal bottles found in KF2). What is new is the interesting ability to heal up at various inns encountered in the overland potions of the game. Pay the innkeeper a fixed amount of gold, and a number of hit and magic points are returned, and this gives the character an option to utilise the spectacular magical attacks as well as hacking at foes, before backtracking to an inn for a stock-up. This makes for a more accessible fighting system and a greater emphasis on magical experimentation that newcomers should warm to.



アレフ様が命を掛けた封印も、
その効力が次第に弱まっている
ようです。城への道は魔物が増
えていますから、近づかない方
がよいでしょう。

LAZALO

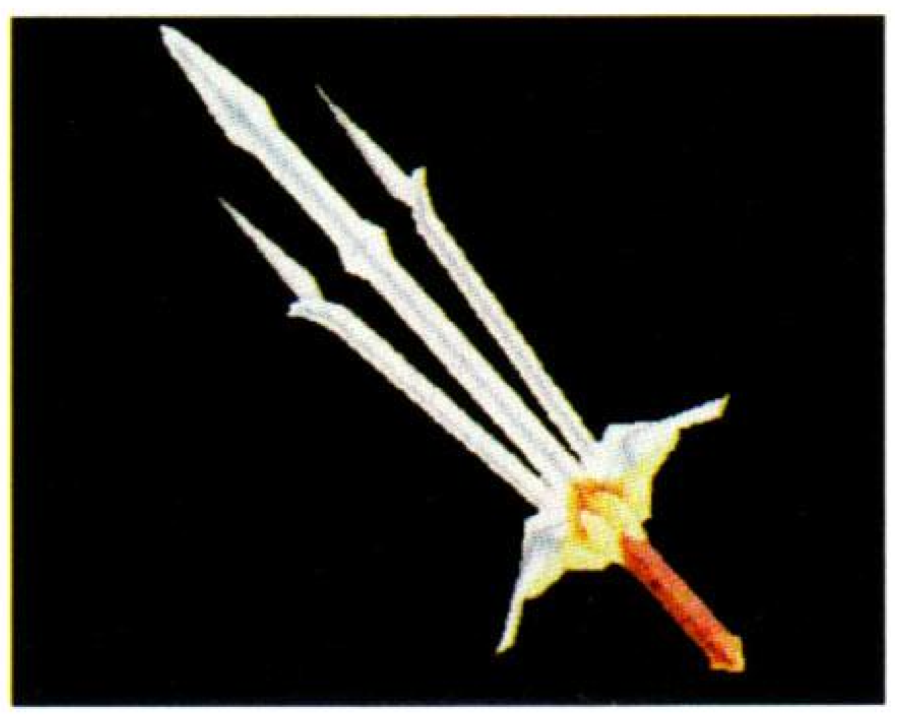
The most exciting news is the sheer size of the forthcoming quest: The second King's Field game was composed of eight different maps (taking days and days to complete), but From have pulled out all the stops and created an unbelievable 24 questing maps for the third adventure. The screenshots show portions of an area in one large map, and indicate that a mixture of dungeon and overground questing is now part of the mission on many of the levels. A final excellent feature is an auto-map that details previously explored zones. Although very early in development, King's Field 3 is shaping up well. Official PlayStation owners should not despair, as Sony have stated that King's Field 2 (which received an Extended Play in issue two) is gaining a UK release this year. And about time.

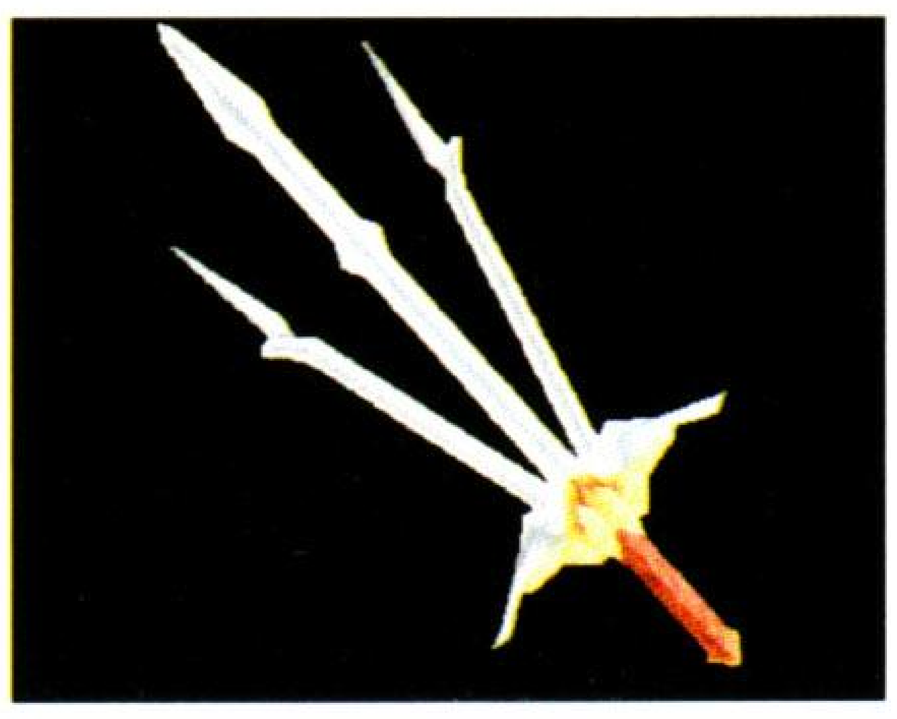


OUT IN THE OPEN!
An excellent addition to the features of King's Field 3 is the automapping feature. Now you can view your continuing quest on this fine parchment enabling easy location of this fine drinking establishment.

KING'S FIELD 2

Returning to the main fortress in Verdite, Jan recounts his tail. Hearing of the destruction of the possessed monarch, the ministers transfer the country's leadership to Jan, who becomes the first of the Forrester Kings. The devastated area around the Dragon Shrine is rebuilt, and Jan's antique weapon comes to be known as the Moonlight Sword; the symbol of a united Verdite. All is cheerful and quiet until the holy sword is stolen by a wayward Priest King who flees the isle of Melanat with a number of reappearing demons. Jan has pledged to fight internal power struggles, and leaves the adventuring to a friend; Alexander Garusha Regnus. Alex hears hushed mutterings about the existence of two otherworld entities who are attempting to pervert the world of humans into an armed conflict. The two ethereal horrors are known to be called Sheath and Glra. After a long and arduous quest, Alex learns of a secret Dragon King Herb, steals Sheath's magical sword of power and finally faces the mighty Gira (who turns out to be a huge Dragon of Darkness). In the ensuing combat, a great wound from Sheath's sword rips the underbelly of Gira and he howls in anguish. Alex retreats and returns to Verdite.

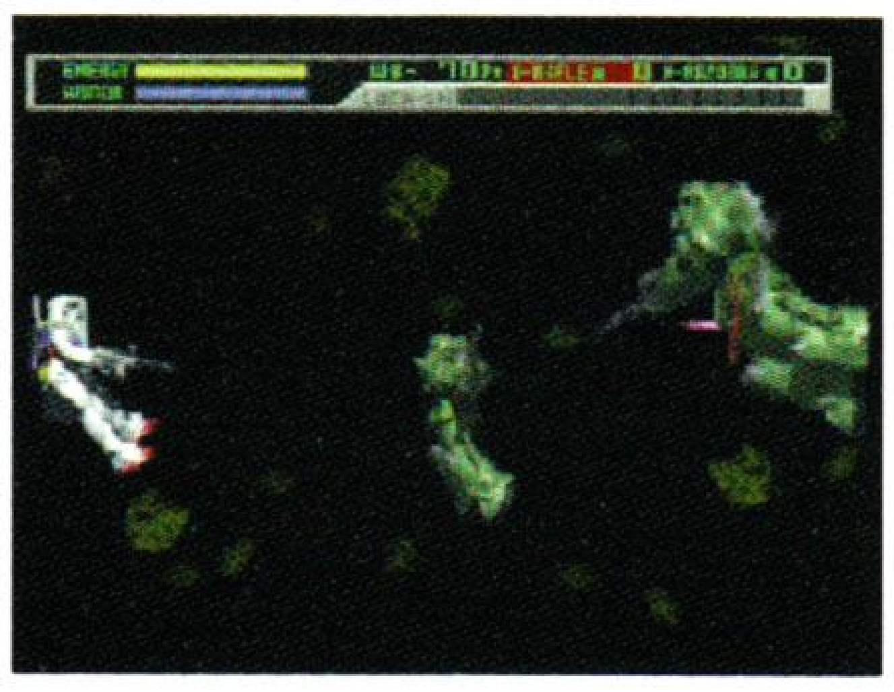




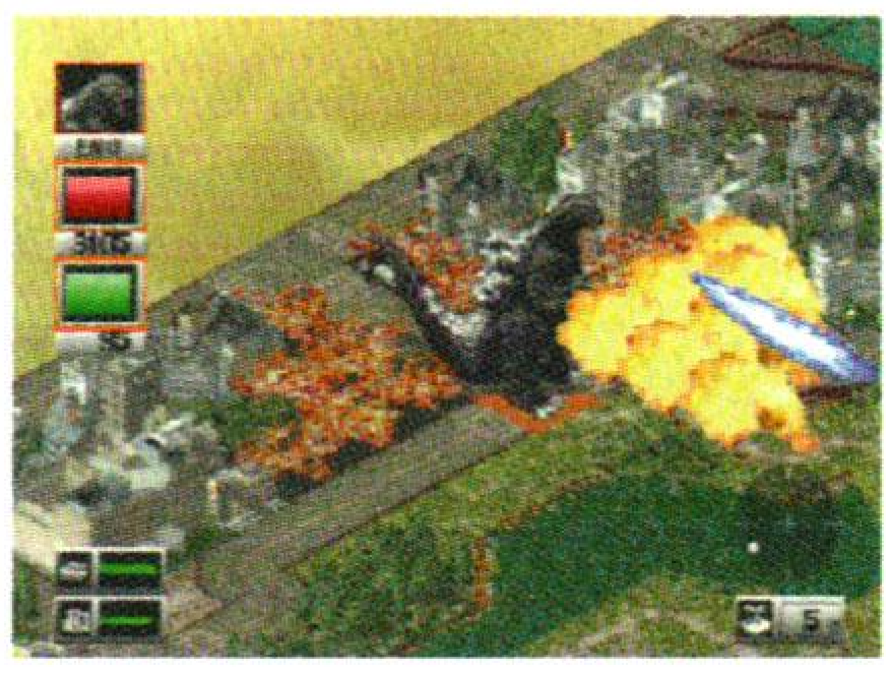
WEAPONS OF WONDER!
The number of close-combat impliments available to the adventurer has been upped considerably. Hack away with this three-pronged monstrosity known as the Triple Fang (above)!

RISING SUN RELEASES

SEGA SATURN SOFTWARE IN JAPAN



The Sega Saturn has now established itself as the number one next generation console in Japan, thanks in no small part to the incredible (but totally unsurprising) success of Virtua Fighter 2. At the height of the VF2 frenzy, Saturns were allegedly out-selling PlayStations six to one - a firm indicator of just how popular VF is in the Land of the Rising Sun. Now the new year is upon us and MAXIMUM casts its critical eye over the new import wares freshly arrived from Japan.



NURSE! THE SCREENS!
The entire team gasped in horror at this mockery of a game (above). Please, take Gundam away from us immediately.

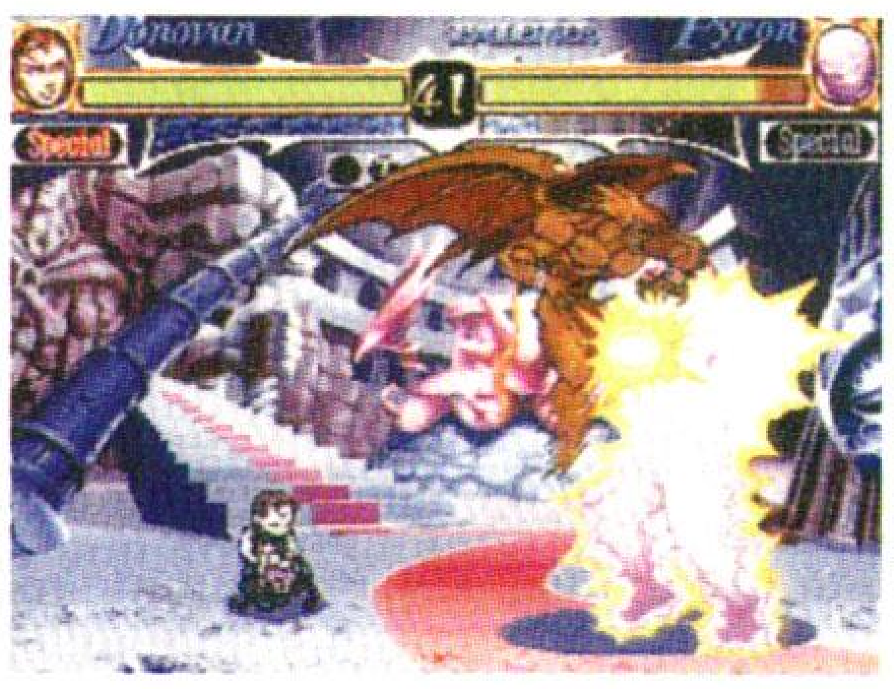
As is the case with the PlayStation gear this month, the quality level of the imports has dropped dramatically. Two new releases: Mobile Suit Gundam and Godzilla, are particularly bad examples of Saturn games. The latter is clearly an example of an old license tying into a new movie release. The latest (and indeed last) Godzilla movie is doing brisk business in Japan, although its ending has apparently led to riots in Japan (since you're unlikely to see it, the movie climaxes with the death (gasp!) of Godzilla). The game is isometric 3D fare that's pretty incomprehensible by European standards. It's not exactly the pinnacle of Saturn gaming, although it has attracted some reasonable reviews in the Japanese press.

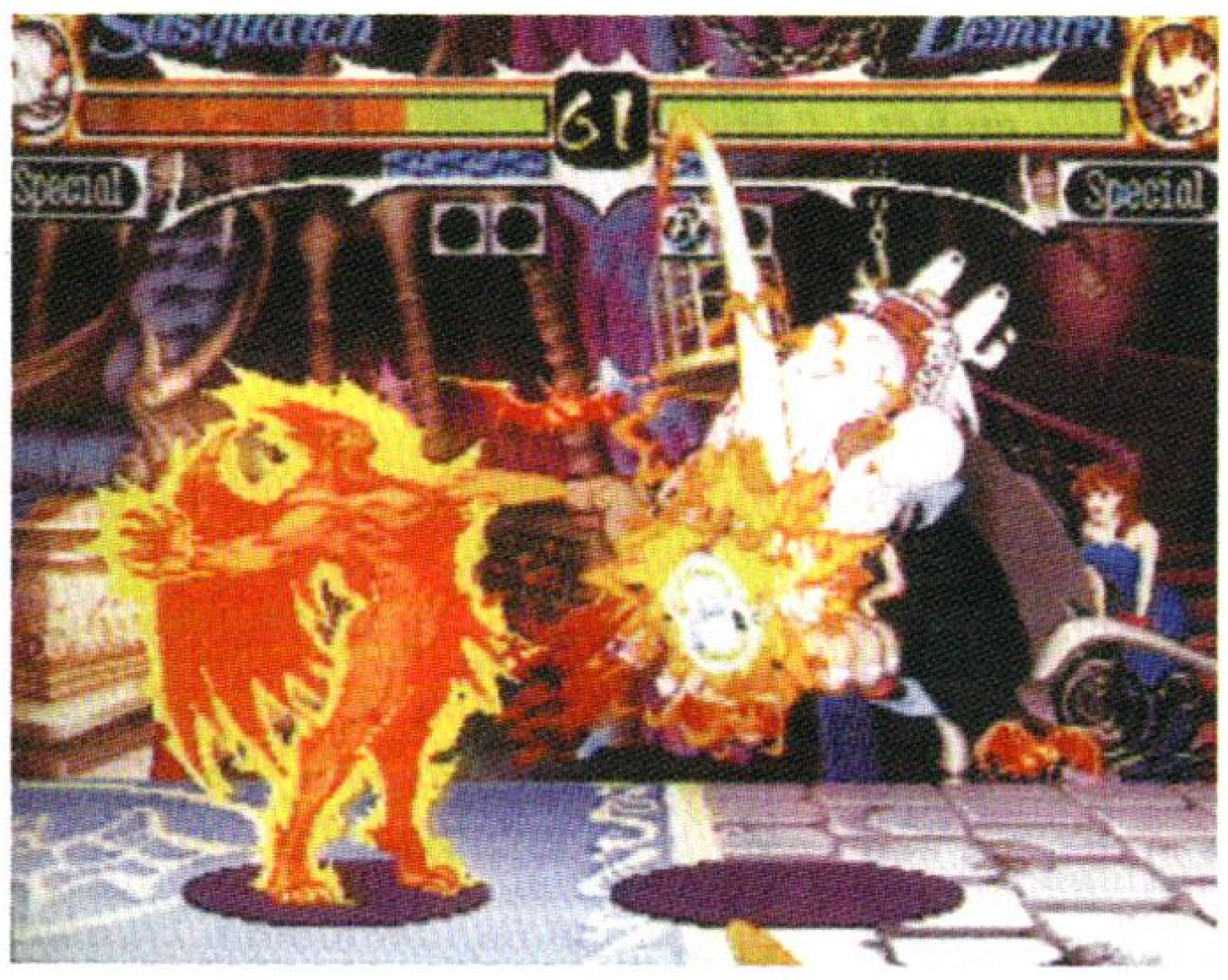
With regard to Gundam... Well, let's just say that things start badly, with no screenshots adorning the packaging whatsoever. Boot up the game and you can see why: extremely dodgy anime-style full-motion video kicks off the proceedings, but nothing can compare you for the graphical ineptitude that greets you during the side-scrolling in-game "action". Megadrive-quality graphics and poor, repetitive gameplay set the scene for what is truly a monumentally awful release. And yet... well, Gundam is one of those games that is truly compelling in its tragic nature. You keep on playing to see just what else publishers Bandai unleash on you. This is in no way an invitation to buy the product - it is more of a sad indictment of the current mental state of the **MAXIMUM** team.

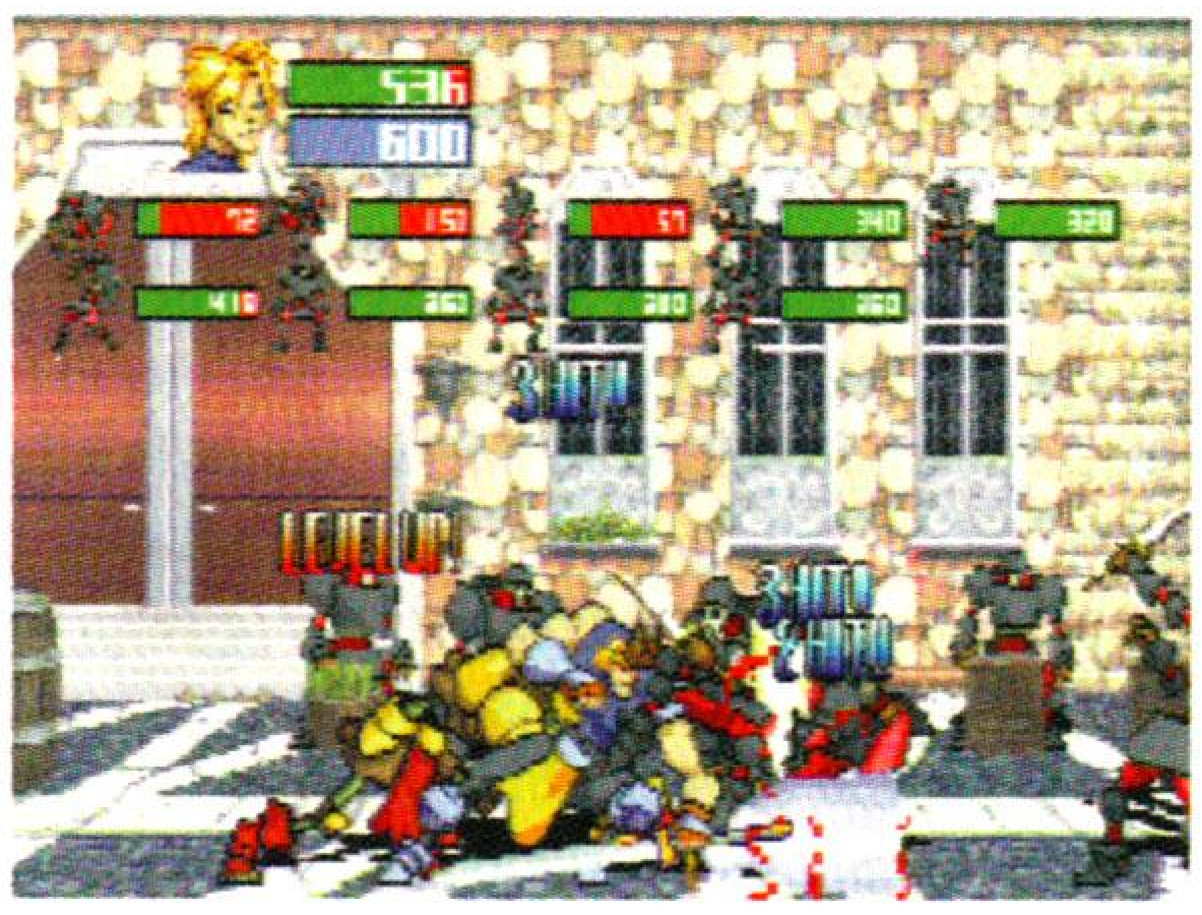
Two quality products are now available on import, which we have no hesitation in recommending whatsoever. Both of them are featured elsewhere in this issue, but for completeness' sake, we'll mention them here. The first is Treasure's triumphant Guardian Heroes (Extended Play coverage begins on page 50). A marvellous sideways scrolling beat 'em up cum role-playing game, this is by far the best thing on the import market at the moment. Unless you like Capcom fighting games, in which case we highly recommend checking out Vampire Hunter.

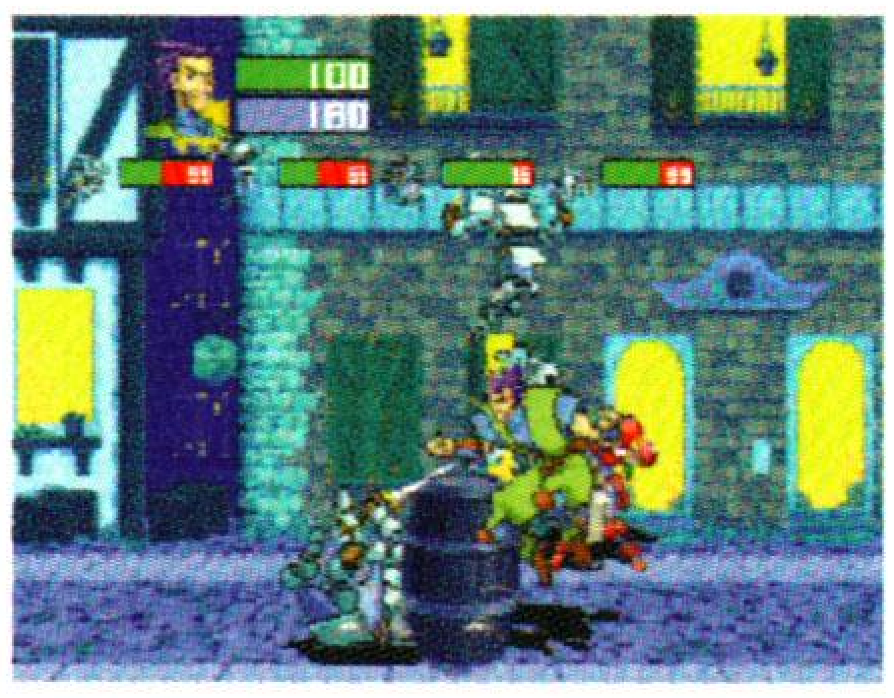
For the uninitiated, this is actually DarkStalkers 2: Night Warriors (as it was known in UK arcades) and is rather smart. This is a classy Saturn product, but rather than discuss it here, **MAXIMUM** intends to produce an excellent Extended Play for issue #5.

WHERE'S GODZUKI THEN?
Godzilla is a below-par video game with little to offer an import Saturn owner.

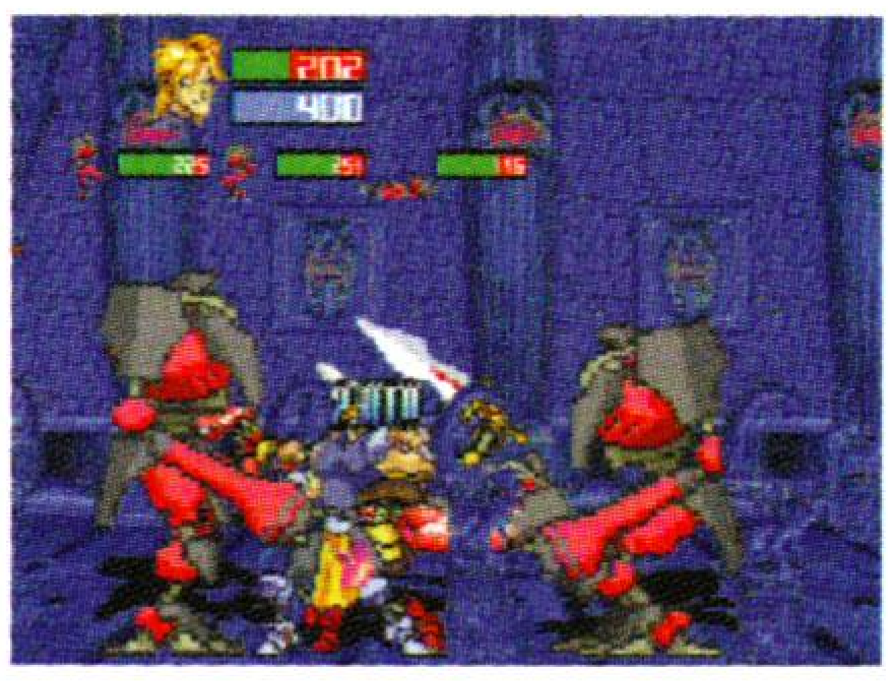






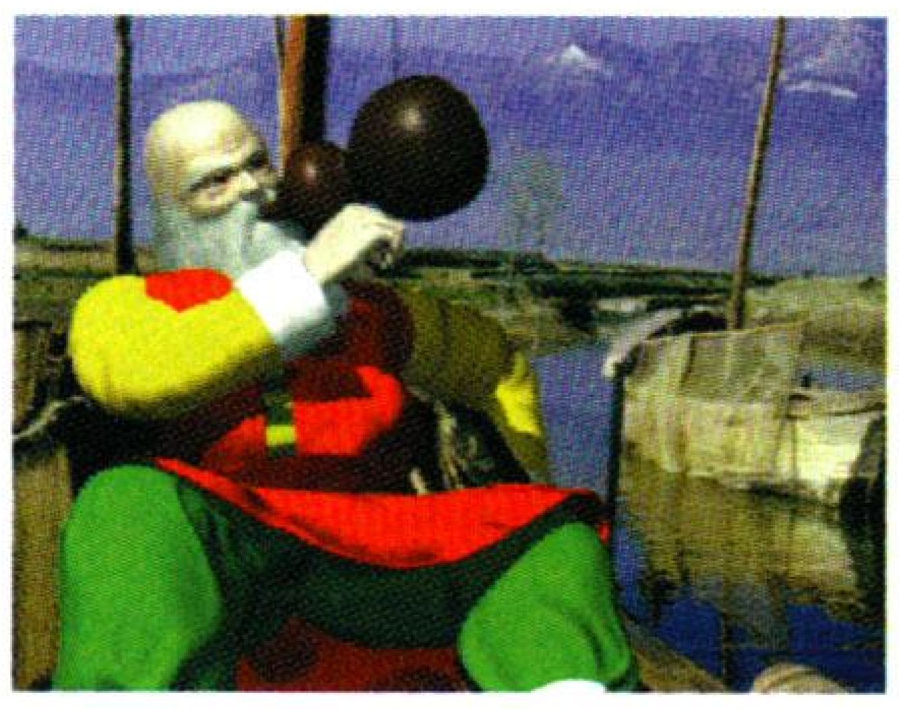


45-PLAYER ACTION?
One of the strengths of Guardian Heroes lies in the sheer number of characters available. With Vampire Hunter, the action has heated up considerably (left), with more characters and some jaw-droppingly impressive super moves.



More Virtua Fighter 2 CG discs are here! Watch with glee as Lion pats his dog and Shun falls over!

LION RAFALE - HE SKIS!
When not engaged in enraged bouts of fisticuff action, our French lad enjoys a spot of snow surfing and also likes to pat his dog, Bernard. We're just waiting for the final two discs and the limited edition Dural offering... then we're giving them all away!

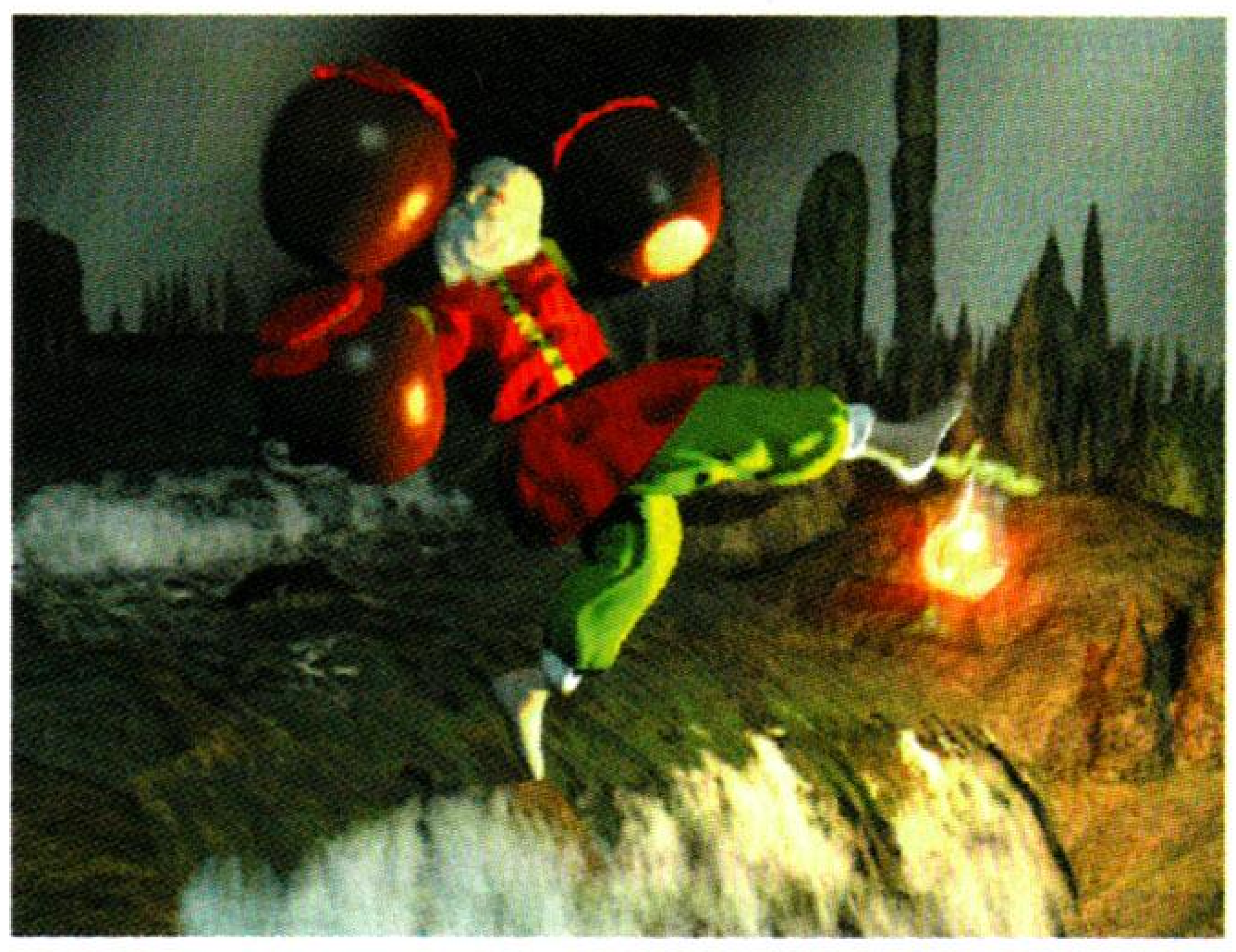


Rounding off our import selection this month is (you guessed it) two more Virtua Fighter CG discs. Featured this month are the VF2 newcomers Shun Di and Lion Rafale. As expected, the weirdness continues unabated with the French Mantis Fist expert seen er, sleeping, wearing designer suits and hanging out with two breeds of dog. Very strange indeed. To be honest, the quality of the CGs isn't so hot here.

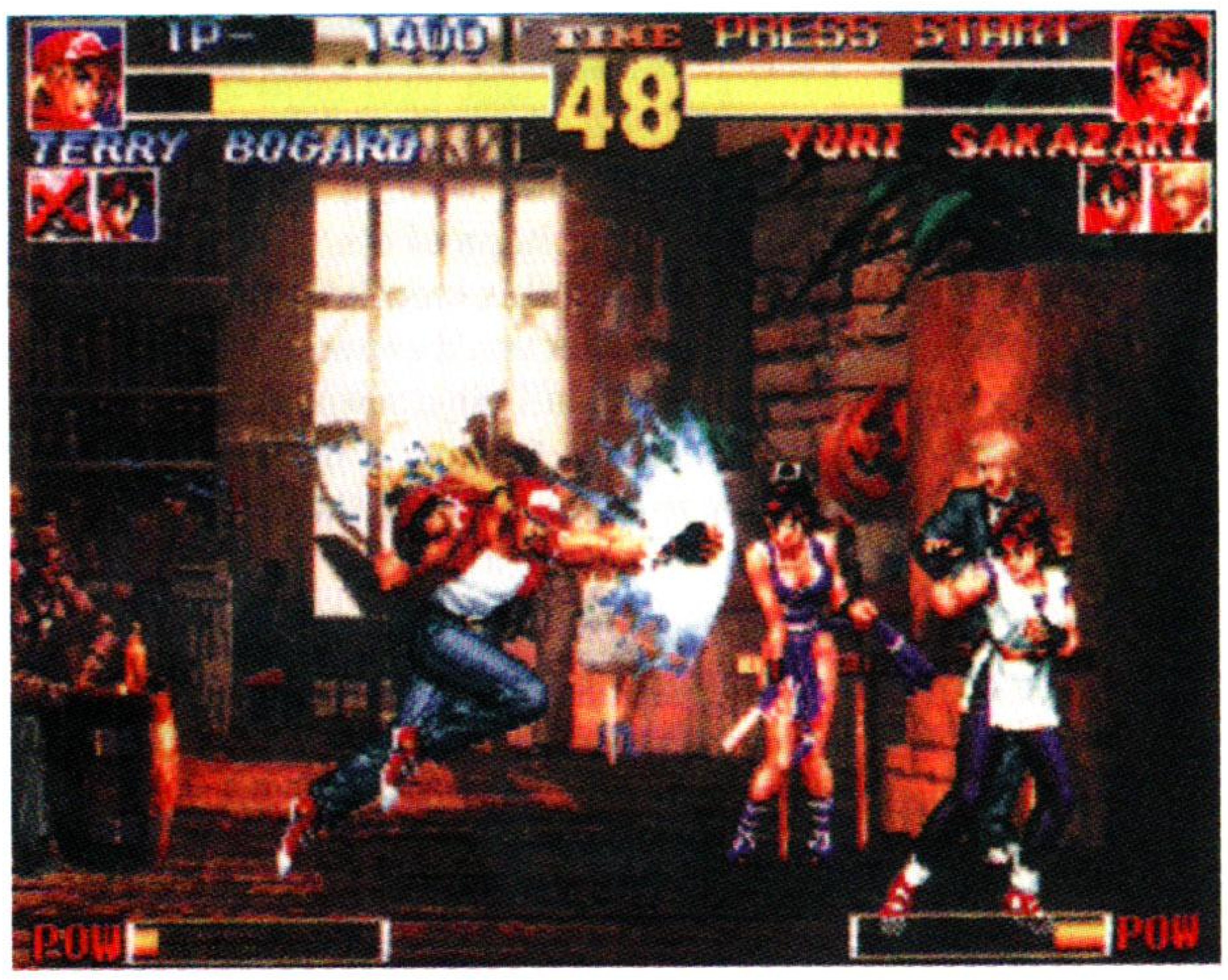
Far superior is the Shun Di contribution, which features far more intricate visuals and better representations of the character. No dogs here - oh no, Shun hangs out with large ox in this particular disc. This is closer to the spirit of the character in that Shun spends a fair amount of time quaffing sake. One highly irritating factor is the hugely embarrassing tree trunk that sometimes scrolls by some of the pictures. What a debacle!

More Saturn imports next month, but the bottom line is: check out Vampire Hunter or Guardian Heroes, but leave everything else well alone.

SHUN DI - HE STAGGERS!
The old-timer can still hold his own in the 'hopping across a waterfall and juggling three jars' stakes!



KING OF FIGHTERS '95: Release date set!



Great news for Saturn owners - the incredible King of Fighters '95 is now nearing the end of its surprisingly short gestation cycle and promises to be identical to its Neo Geo CD counterpart - but with minimal loading delays.

Many doubts were expressed as to the potential quality of the conversion, since the Saturn only has two-and-a-half megabytes of internal RAM to store the actual game code. This is as opposed to the Neo Geo, which weighs in with a weighty eight megs. SNK have been totally unwilling to compromise the quality of their Saturn game and so have decided upon a novel solution - they're going to release their own plug-in ROM cartridge (around two megabyte mark) which features the majority of the character animation. Running the show though is the usual CD, which is believed to contain peripheral data such as backgrounds and of course, music.

35
TERRY BOGARD

That means a totally perfect conversion of one of the greatest fighting games it's ever been **MAXIMUM**'s pleasure to play. The one down-side is the price of the game. KoF '95 is by far the most expensive Saturn game to date, priced at 7,800 yen (by comparison, VF2 was 5,800).

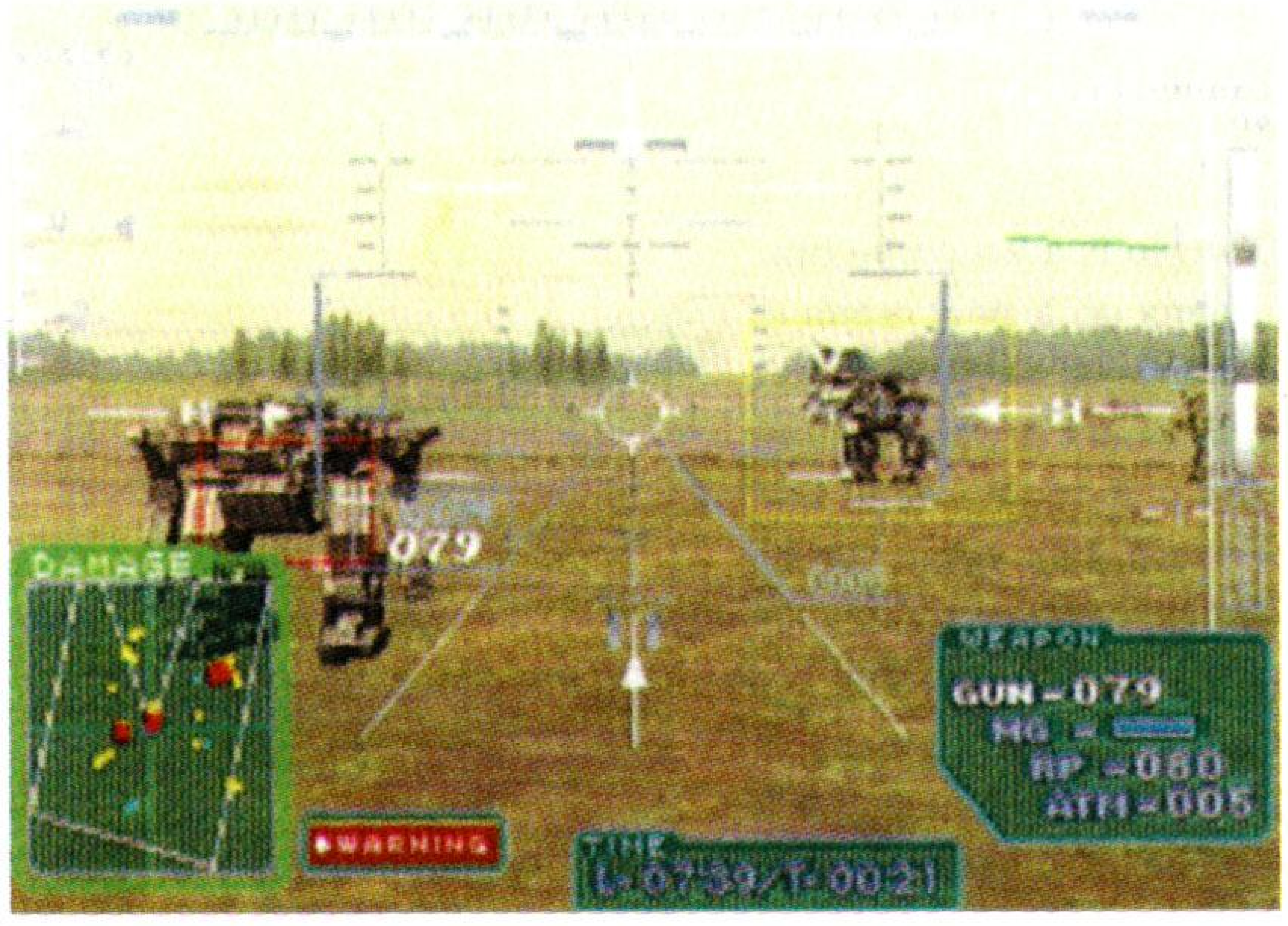
The game has recently been given a concrete Japanese release date - 28 March, meaning that we should have something to show in time for the next edition of the magazine. If you're a Saturn owner demanding more information about a game of this potential, we refer you to the Extended Play in **MAXIMUM** issue #1.

Also coming soon from SNK is the lamentable World Heroes Perfect, which also uses the memory cartridge. A Fata Fury game of some description (either FF3 or the new Real Bout - see page 40) is also due on the Saturn sometime this year.

AWESOME GAME ALERT!
For those who haven't experienced the delights of this SNK classic - where have you been? King of Fighters is a truly outstanding release in every scene of the word. Saturn import owners; reserve your copy now!

POWER KNUCKLE!
We've checked the Saturn version of the game against the original, and it looks arcade perfect to us!

GUN GRIFFON gears up for March release!



Having reset the standards of Mega-CD software many years ago with the critically acclaimed Silpheed, Game Arts are set to revolutionise Saturn software with the forthcoming Gun Griffon: The Eurasian Conflict. The game is a first person perspective 3D shooting game featuring some stunning texture-mapped military hardware.

Set in the early 21st century, Game Arts have effectively mixed today's technoloy with the military equipment of tomorrow - helicopters and tanks which are state-of-the-art today are the cannon fodder of Gun Griffon, whilst enormous Gundam-style 'Mechs battle it out on the Eurasian killing fields. Part of the game's original specs was the inclusion of a link-up mode using the forthcoming communications cable. Since details are sparse, we can't tell you as to whether this has made it into the final game - however, we should know for sure in time for **MAXIMUM** issue #5, by which time we'll hopefully have the game on import (a Japanese release of March 15 has been set).

Despite the lack of any concrete information, the game has done the rounds at the last few Japanese exhibitions and has been received enthusiastically by Japanese journalists and gamers alike. We've got pretty high hopes for Gun Griffon, and we can reveal that the game is currently being appraised by several European publishers. We should have more details next month.

METAL JACKET? NO WAY!
There is simply no comparison between this and the pokery of Metal Jacket, mark our words!

NIGHTS: First eyewitness report!

It is said to be Sega's #1 product currently in the throes of R&D. It's an original product and it's got a priority level even higher than the prospective produce of the AM divisions of Sega of Japan. The company are being totally secretive about it and plan to use it to counter the incredible Super Mario 64. The title in question is of course, Nights, the first Saturn product from the Sonic Team.

Up until a month ago, no-one outside of Sega had seen the game, but all that changed when Sega Europe held a third party conference to attract development for their machine in January. Of course, **MAXIMUM** had a spy in their midst to check the game out. The development remains extremely early, but two demos were on display - one rolling demo showing the game in action, the other playable.

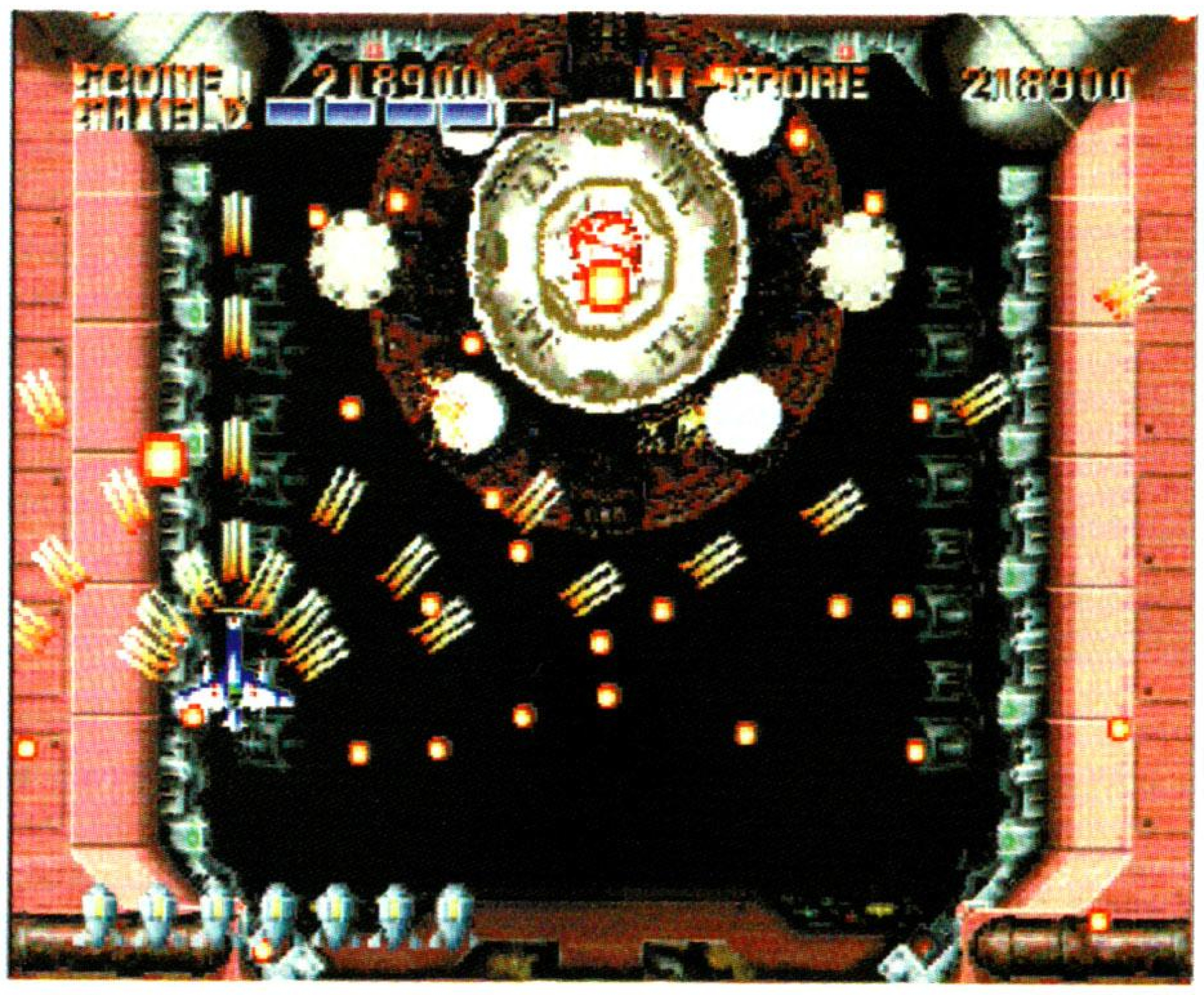
Best described as a true 3D platformer in the style of the new Mario, Nights doesn't feature Sonic in any shape or form (contrary to inaccurate reports in the games press), but features an all-new hero capable of running, jumping and indeed flying. The trick with this platformer is that the scenery rotates around the main character in a most impressive manner. This is in a similar vein to the Mazzer title, although it doesn't feature quite the same degree of freedom as the Miyamoto title.

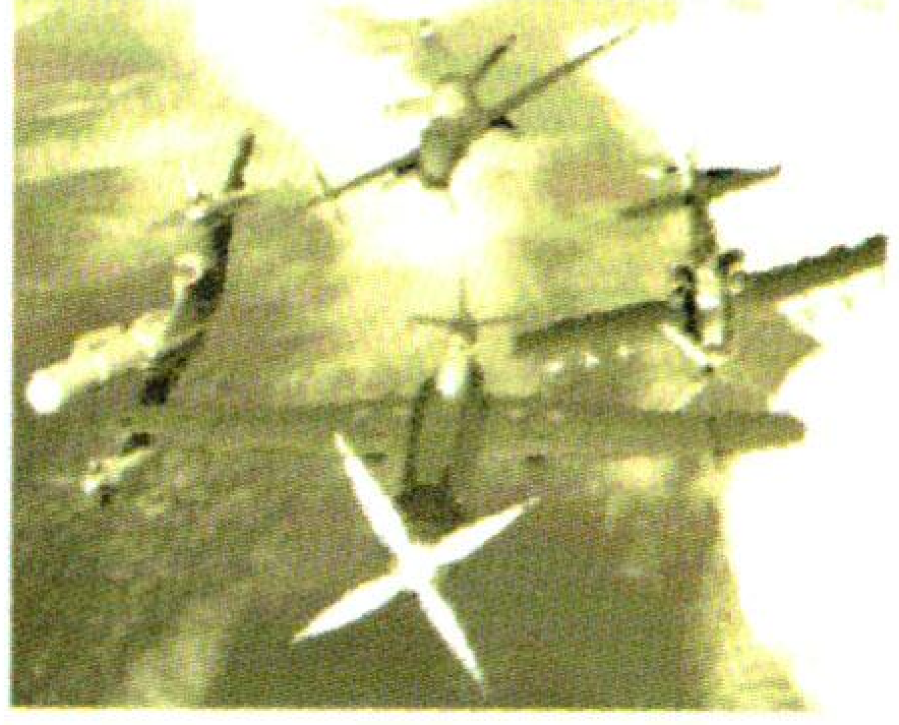
Our spy came away stunned with the 3D technology in use and it would seem that looks-wise, Nights is more than a match for any 3D game you would have seen to date. Combine this prospective title with the absolutely incredible Panzer Dragoon II (you won't believe that a Saturn is producing that title, believe us) and it would seem that the Saturn has the 3D muscle not only to compete with PlayStation, but maybe Nintendo 64 as well. Expect the first screenshots over the next couple of months.

FOR QUEEN AND COUNTRY

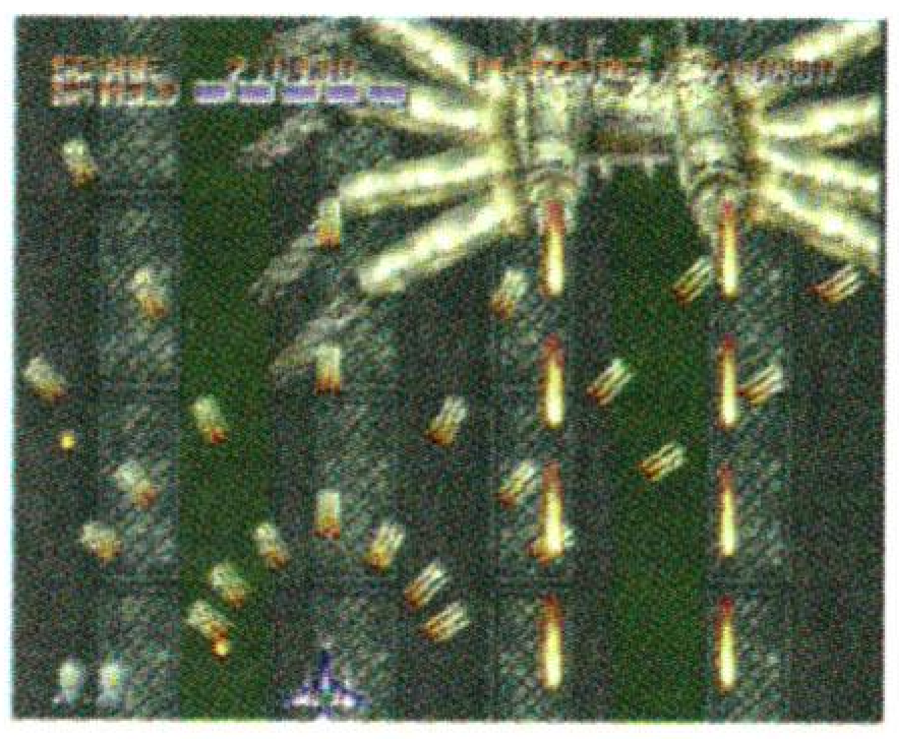
PLAYSTATION SOFTWARE IN JAPAN

It's time, once again, for MAXIMUM to casts its critical eye over the latest batch of Japanese import PlayStation releases in the hope of discovering a few rays of gaming sunshine in our otherwise dreary lives. Unfortunately, this month things reach an all-time low, with a crop of 'games' (and I use the term loosely) so poor you'd expect to find them all outside Waterloo selling The Big Issue. And you thought Japan was all Miyamoto, Namco and Capcom. Well wake up, and say hello to 'premiere' software developers Santos, Xing, and Altron! Clearly names to watch for in the future! But is there any joy to gleamed from these titles, or er, not? There's only one way to find out. Once more unto the breach dear friends!



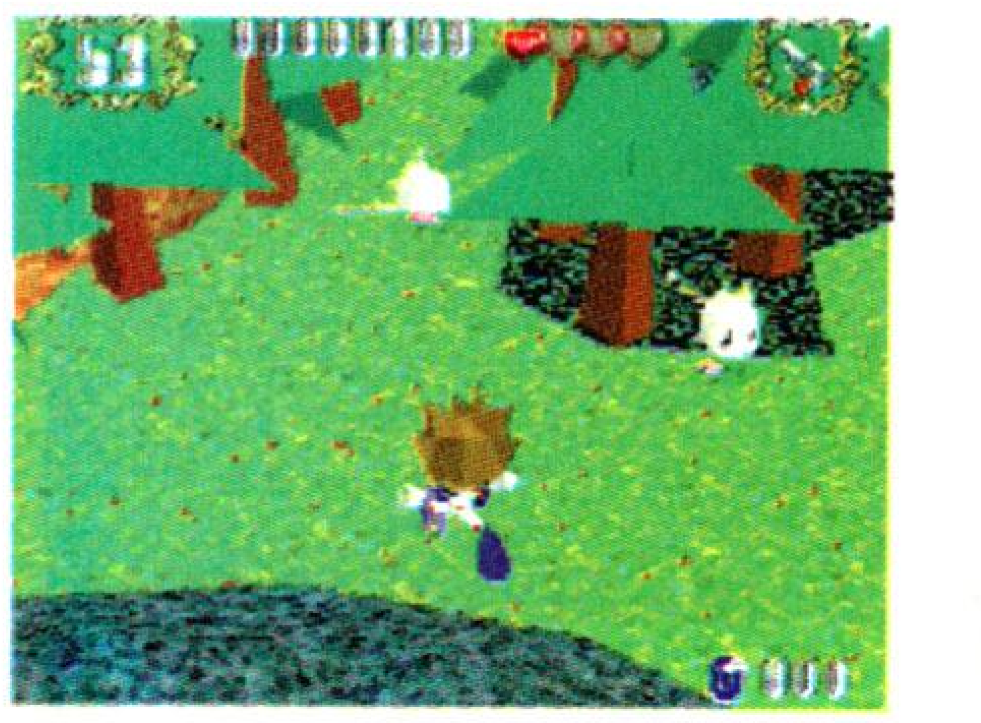


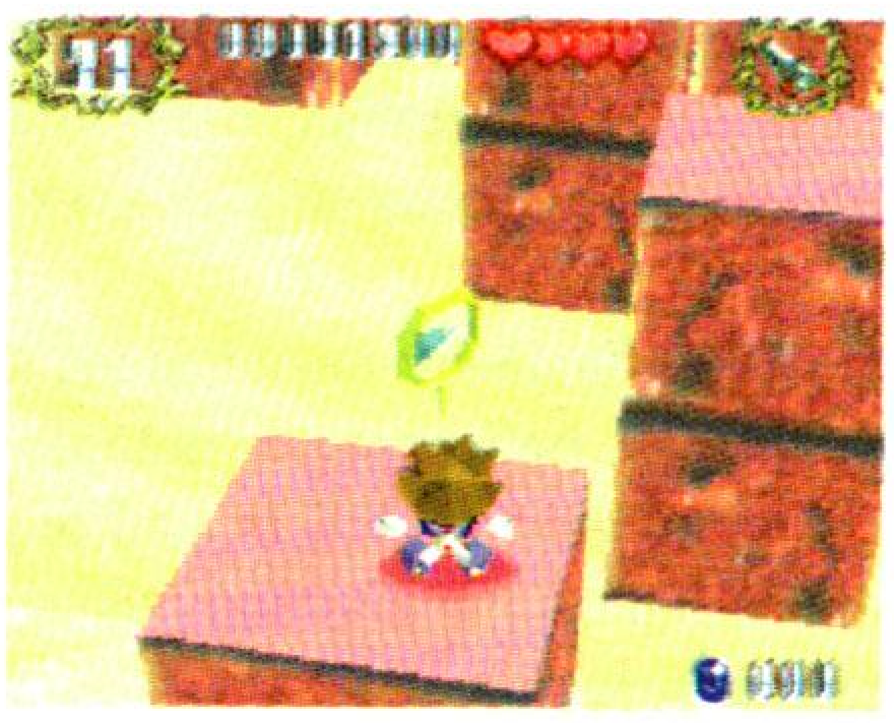
First on the hit list we have Stahlfeder, an appaling vertically scrolling shoot 'em up from Santos. Spanning six short levels, the game follows the fixed genre routines of cannon fodder, boss, next level. Times six. Players select from a choice of craft, each with two types of shot which, surprise surprise, can be powered-up several levels, and embark on a search and destroy mission to fend off marauding aliens and save the world or something. This is blasting action at its poorest. There are only two weapons which both reach maximum power after only a few minutes' play, the explosions are often obtrusive, and the music sounds suspiciously like something Konami did on the Super NES four years ago. Another major annoyance is how the enemies fly onto the screen on several vertical levels above and below the player. This would be fine where it not for the poor simulation of depth, meaning that you can't tell what's where, resulting in much confusion and annoyance. However, what is really unforgivable is the difficulty level. **MAXIMUM** completed the game on our first go, without losing a life, in under half an hour, and the end game credits lasted for longer than that. We didn't even realise we had smart bombs to use until we pressed the button by accident on the last stage. The only thing Stahlfeder has going for it are some nice polygon effects on a few of the bosses (though notably not the final 'mother brain' boss which must rank as the most appaling end-game opponent in the history of videogames). It's a telling sign when a game from 1984 outshines the the latest Japanese shoot 'em up (Xevious on the Namco Museum).

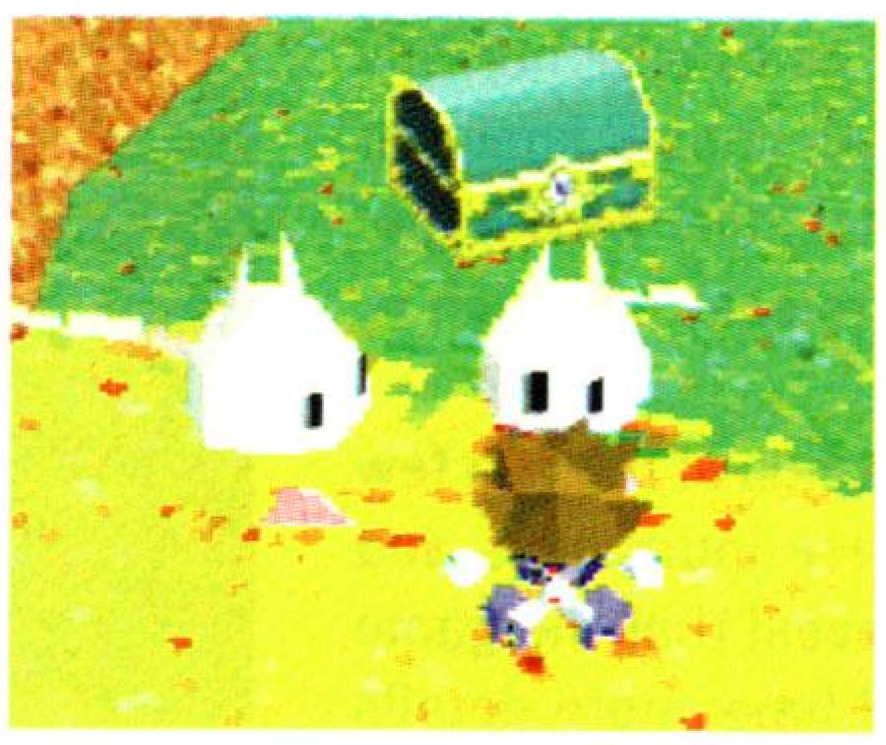


IT'S STAHLFEDER
The PlayStation seems to be attracting plenty of poor shooters at the moment.

Moving swiftly on, we have Xing's Floating Runner, a cutesy 3D platform game that is as appaling to look at as it is to play. Selecting to be either a small deformed male or female collection of wobbly polygons, the player ventures into a series of badly rendered 3D worlds collecting gems, opening chests, jumping on baddies heads or shooting them with a twee blue gun. The idea of taking a standard platform game and transposing it into a 3D world is a welcome one, breathing new life into an old genre, and opens up a new realm of possibilities that only 32-bit technology can harness. Sadly this isn't the game to do it. Adopting an above/behind camera position rather than a first person perspective proves to be a fundamentally bad idea, as the player's viewing angle is not in concordance with the on screen character. While this may get around the problem of distance clipping and allow for smooth action, it also means you can only see a few feet in front of your character and cannot judge distances or heights. This angle can be altered, but amazingly only to make it more acute, moving to view the action from a top/down perspective! **MAXIMUM** did enjoy the way your character does a nifty little somersault to strafe left or right, but that alone is not really enough to warrant a purchase. Something of a tragedy really.



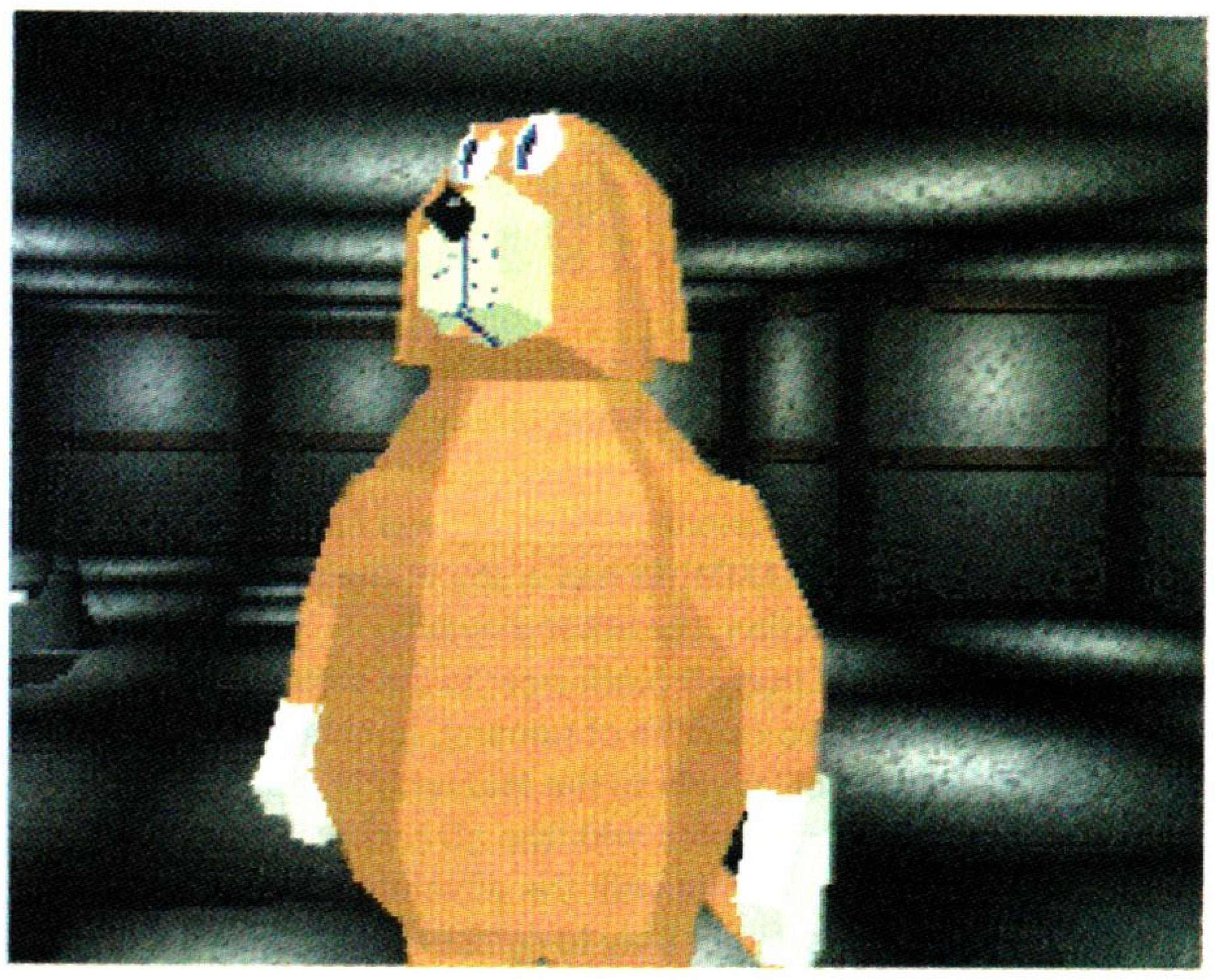




FLOATING RUNNER
Floating Runner certainly looks like a nice idea, but it is spoiled by extremely poor execution and hideous visuals.

Next on the roster of putrid wares is Tokyo Dungeon, a first-person perspective 3D polygon based cyber-punk anime RPG, which makes it sound a lot better than it actually is. In the same vein as King's Field 2 the game blends exploration and character interaction with supposed action scenes, though after a couple of hours playing we couldn't find any action. To be honest, we couldn't find much of anything. Except a big dog. The game is heavy with Japanese text and culture and doesn't have either the atmosphere or the intuitive interface that encouraged us to proceed with King's Field despite the language barrier. The 3D engine is also pretty standard, with a low frame rate and repetitive locations populated by polygon characters sorely lacking in facial features. Except for the dog. **MAXIMUM** is hesitant to condemn Tokyo Dungeon as clearly a lot of its finer details are lost on us, but we can't honestly see a translation coming anytime in the foreseeable future so we will. Don't buy it.

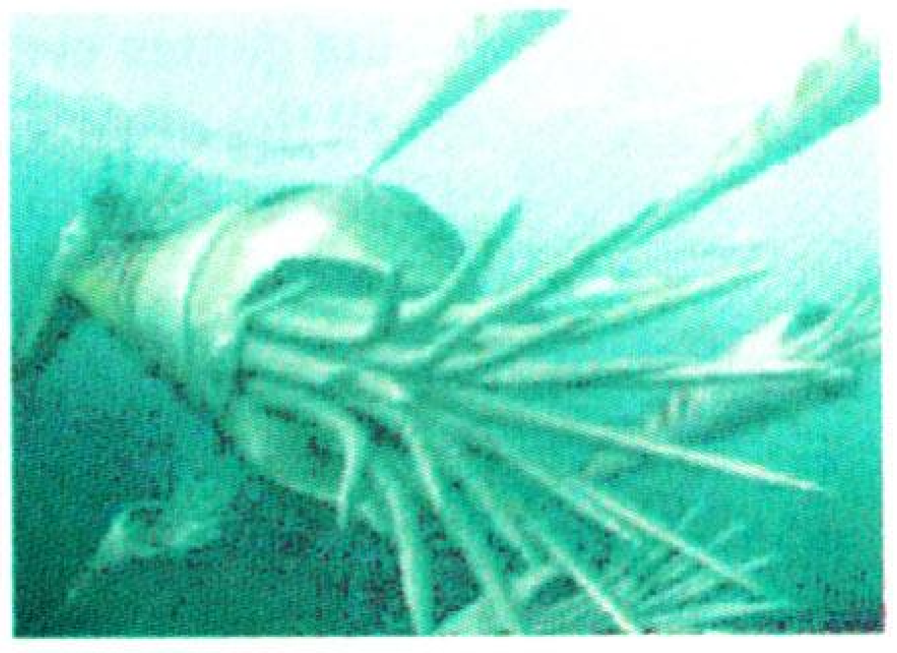
The most tragic import line-up to date? Indeed



Things take a turn for the weird with Pop Science Software's Lifescape, a sort of virtual wildlife theme park simulator. And if that sounds bizarre, that's because it is. Not really a game as such, it seems to us like Lifescape was designed for educational purposes though what anyone could actually learn from this is questionable. The 'product' comes on two disks, Aquasphere and Landsphere, dealing with underwater and terra life forms respectively. When a disk is loaded, the user is presented with extensive pre-rendered footage of the park and tram system that connects the various 'simulator' rooms. These sections

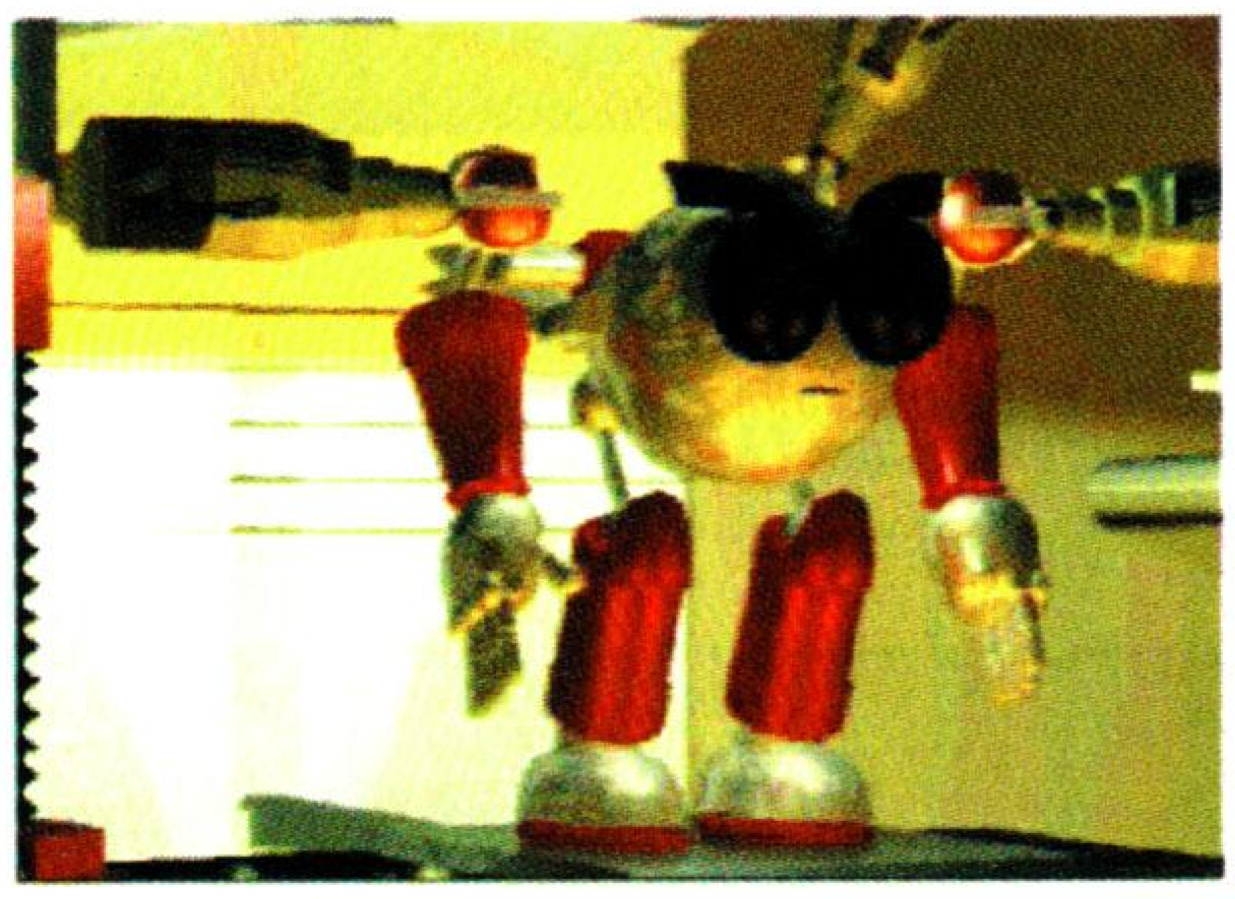
are quite imaginative and hold a certain visual fascination that is carried over to the interactive sections of the game. Once inside a simulator room the user can manipulate a variety of displays to watch pre-rendered clips of the relevant creatures before accessing the simulator machine itself. Each simulator machine provides a different interactive experience specific to the creatures dealt with in that particular area of the park. **MAXIMUM** quite enjoyed becoming a fish and a dinosaur, flying around as a pterodactyl, watching the Monty Pythonesque 'opera du bacteria' and creating our own **MAXIMUM** insect using a DNA building block machine. Once again, qualitative judgments are inappropriate as we can't really comment on the particular demographic that this product was aimed at, but the graphics are inventive and it does have a curiously atmospheric feel to it. Hmmm.

LIFESPHERE
A most intriguing concept this, backed as it is by some fairly decent visuals.



Our penultimate title is an intriguing concept that promises much and delivers nothing. Actron's RoboPit can best be described as a hybrid of Jumping Flash and Tekken, though notably not as good as either. Admittedly, it must have seemed like a good idea at the time: construct your robot from a selection of various parts, including a large range of weapon 'arms', before leaping into the ring and doing battle with one of a 100 other mechanised opponents. The graphics themselves are nice, though nothing particularly special, with three selectable views and multi-layered arenas which take the fighting onto different platform heights. The actual mechanics of the game however, are incredibly simple. Activate left arm, activate right arm, jump, side step, and that's it. The combat itself ends up being simply a trade of blows, with the occasional special move performed once your special move 'bar' has filled. Standard hits cause little damage, so the matches tend to last far too long (unless a ring out occurs) and the movement of your 'bot is slow and unresponsive. Still, at least RoboPit provided a few brief minutes of enjoyable novelty play before being relegated to netherworld depths of the **MAXIMUM** game cupboard.

And where is the quality import software this month?



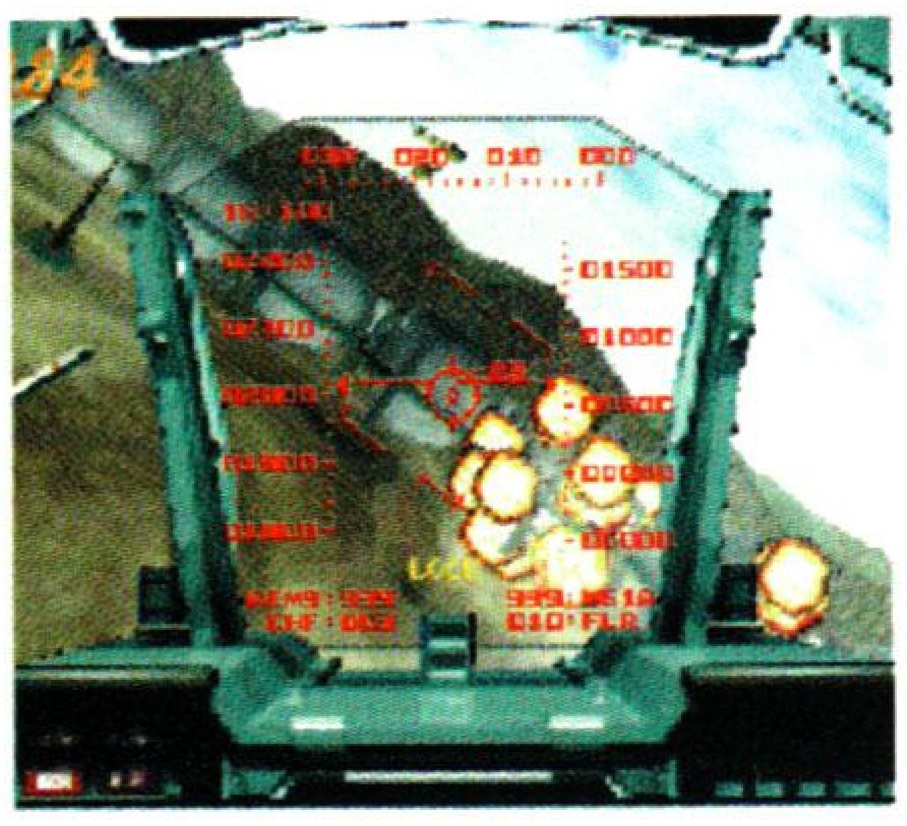
ROBO-PITS
A kind of CyberSled clone, RoboPit was another tragedy we received this month.

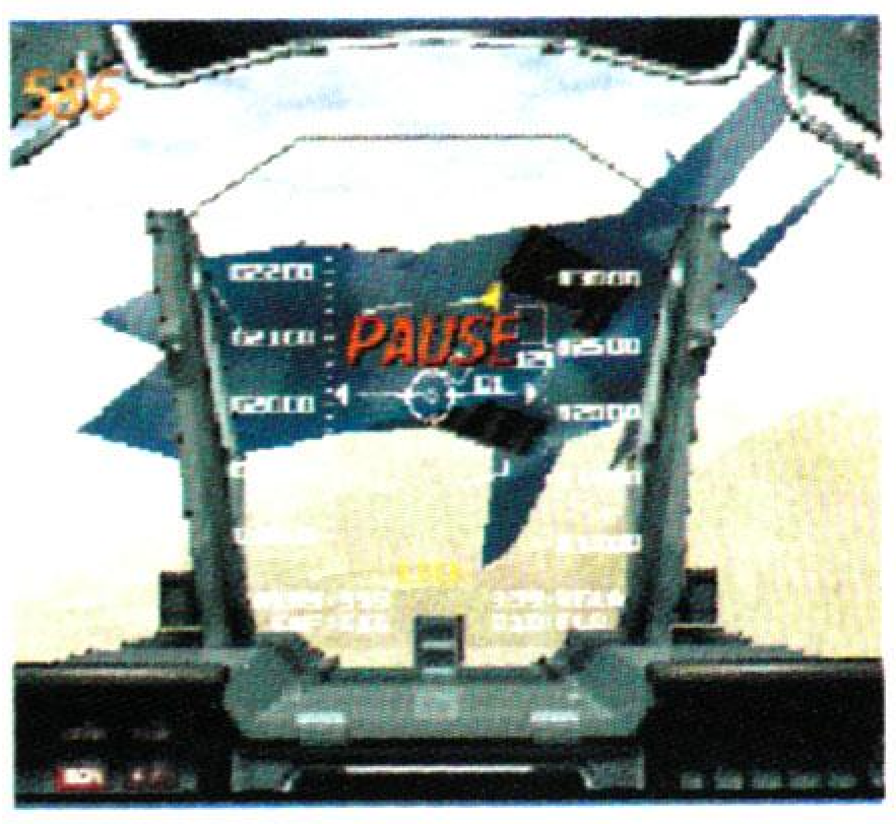
Finally, saving the best for last, we have Asmik's Ace Combat clone, Sidewinder. Though all the games covered this month came with the obligatory pre-rendered intro sequence (except for Stahlfeder which couldn't even be bothered with that) a special mention must go to Sidewinder's, which was particularly impressive, involving several cinematic minutes of gratuitous high-quality rendered 'plane action (taking off, flying about, launching missiles down canyons, that sort of thing). 'It's a real dog fight' the sticker on the box promised and after a few minutes of play we were inclined to disagree. Real it most certainly isn't (a flight sim with left and right strafing buttons?). But that's not necessarily a bad thing. Dispensing with the tedious business of taking off and landing, Sidewinder's many missions place you in the cockpit just moments before initial engagement, allowing you to get stuck into the top dogfighting action right away! Pick your plane, pick your mission, pick your mode and away you go! The in game graphics are smooth and nicely detailed, though the explosions leave something to be desired. You can select between two views (full screen and cockpit), and a constant layer of mist or cloud reduces pop up to an absolute minimum. The actual in-game action couldn't be simpler. Pump the enemy with unlimited missiles and lead while watching out for the ground! Do loop the loops! Get blinded by the sun! Stall your plane! Dodge missiles! Hurtle down narrow canyons with three MiGs on your tale! Hear your pilot shout things like 'bite his head off' and 'bloody hell!'! All is possible in Sidewinder. If you choose to play a campaign game rather than a one off engagement, there are a variety of different mission objectives that increase the games longevity, such as air-to-ground based destruction and friendly escort missions, though the basic premise is always going to be engage enemy aircraft. Still, if arcade flight sims are your cup of tea we think you might enjoy Sidewinder, especially seeing as it contains the two player link-up option sorely missing from Namco's otherwise good Ace Combat.

Hang on to your money and wait for the forthcoming Jumping Flash 2 and Resident Evil!

MORE AIR COMBAT
The market for this type of game is pretty packed at the moment. Sidewinder takes up arms against the likes of Air Combat (obviously), Virgin's Agile Warrior and of course ThunderHawk 2. Although relatively entertaining for a while, Sidewinder is hopelessly outclassed by the opposition.

PICK OF THE BUNCH...
... is Sidewiner - an Air Combat clone which provides a modicum of entertainment - and link-up action.



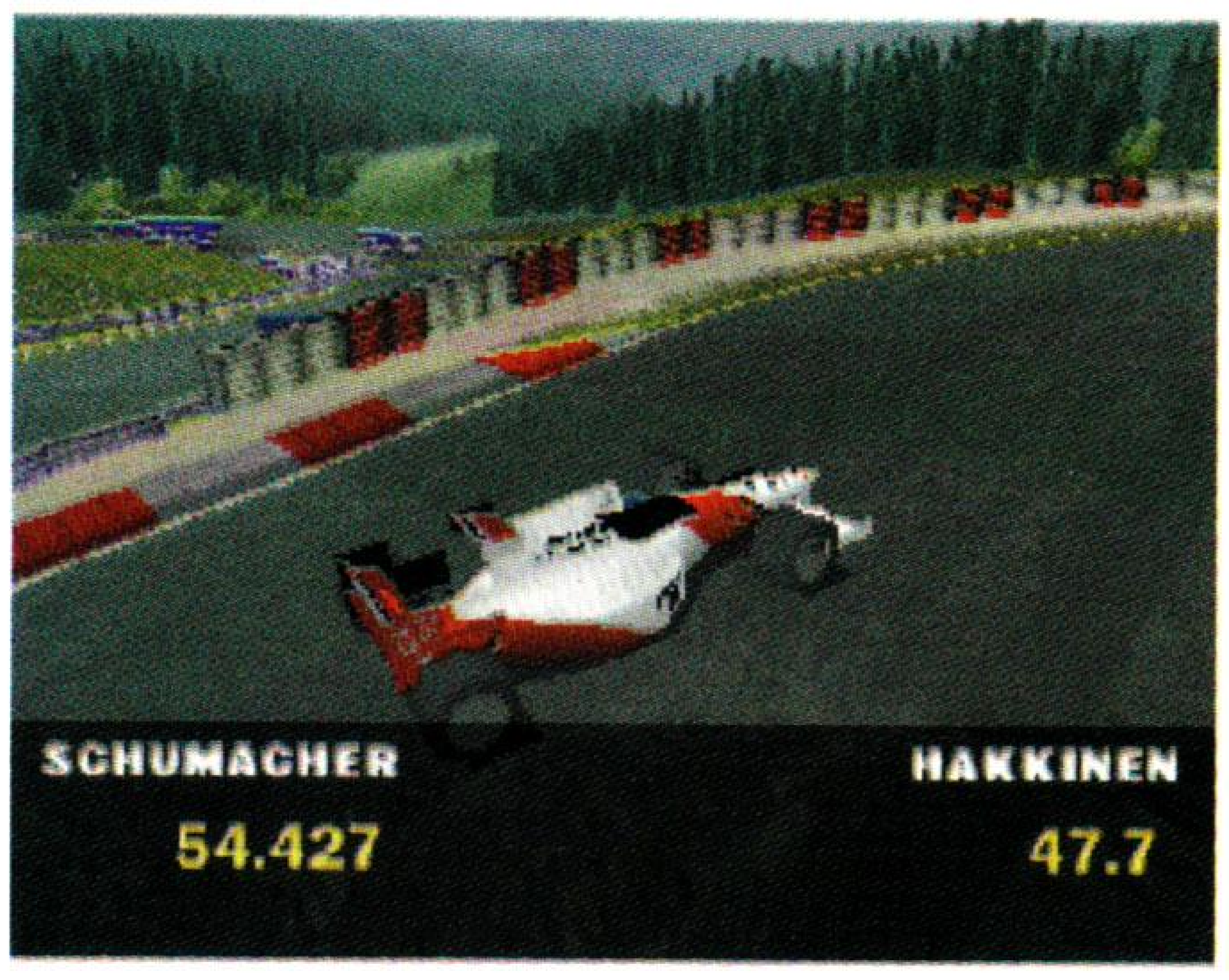


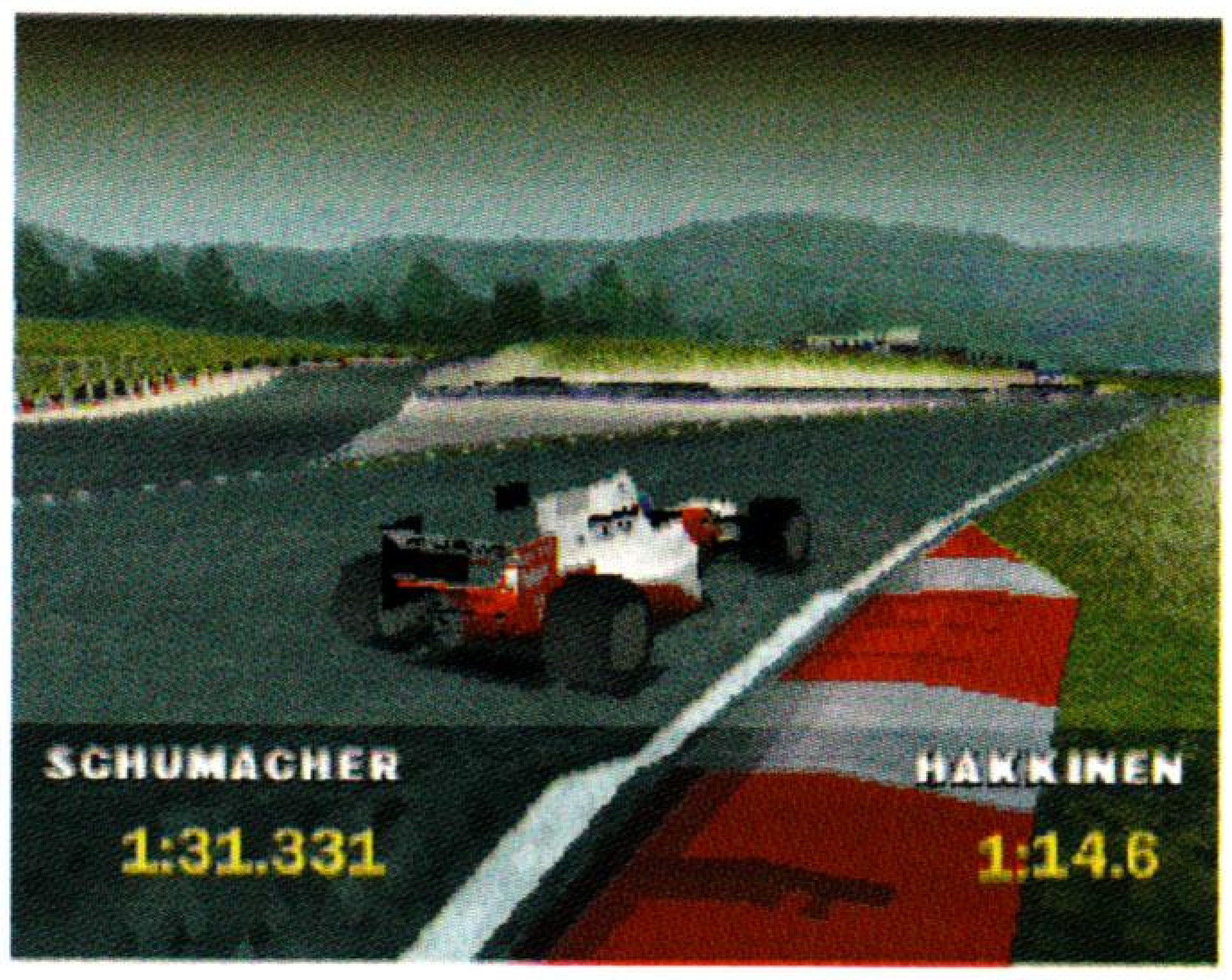
PS ANOTHER SONY SUCCESS STORY
FORMULA 1
PSYGNOSIS AVAILABLE SEPTEMBER '96

THE FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

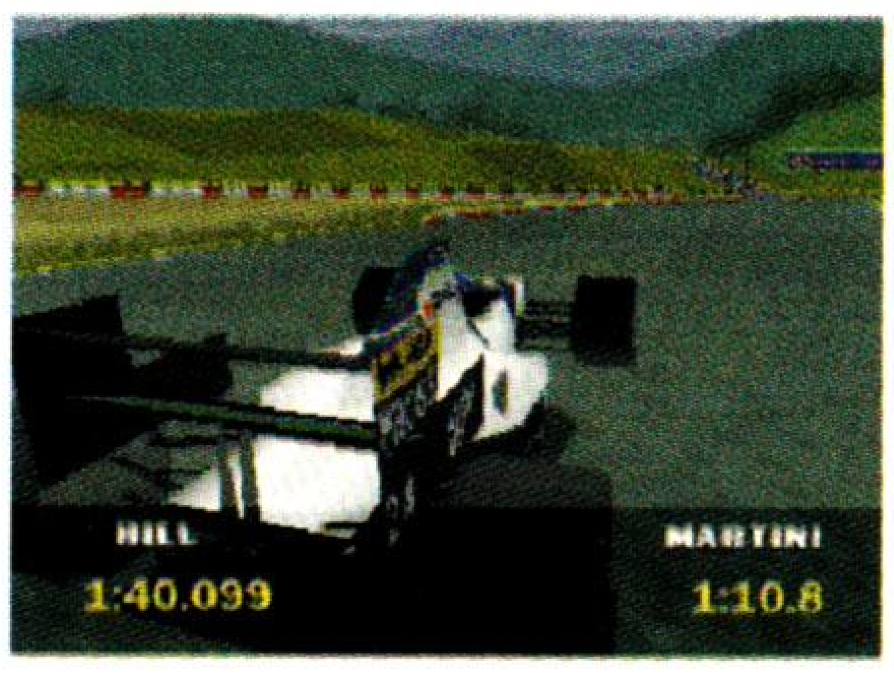
FORMULA 1

Psygnosis have struck a major blow for quality PlayStation software with the unveiling of what looks like being one of the most stunning racing games ever programmed. Licensing the 1995 Formula One season, the Liverpool-based company aim to bring all the speed, all the tracks, all the drivers and of course, all the excitement to the lowly Sony machine. And from what MAXIMUM has already seen with the first playable demo, they're well on course to achieving just that.

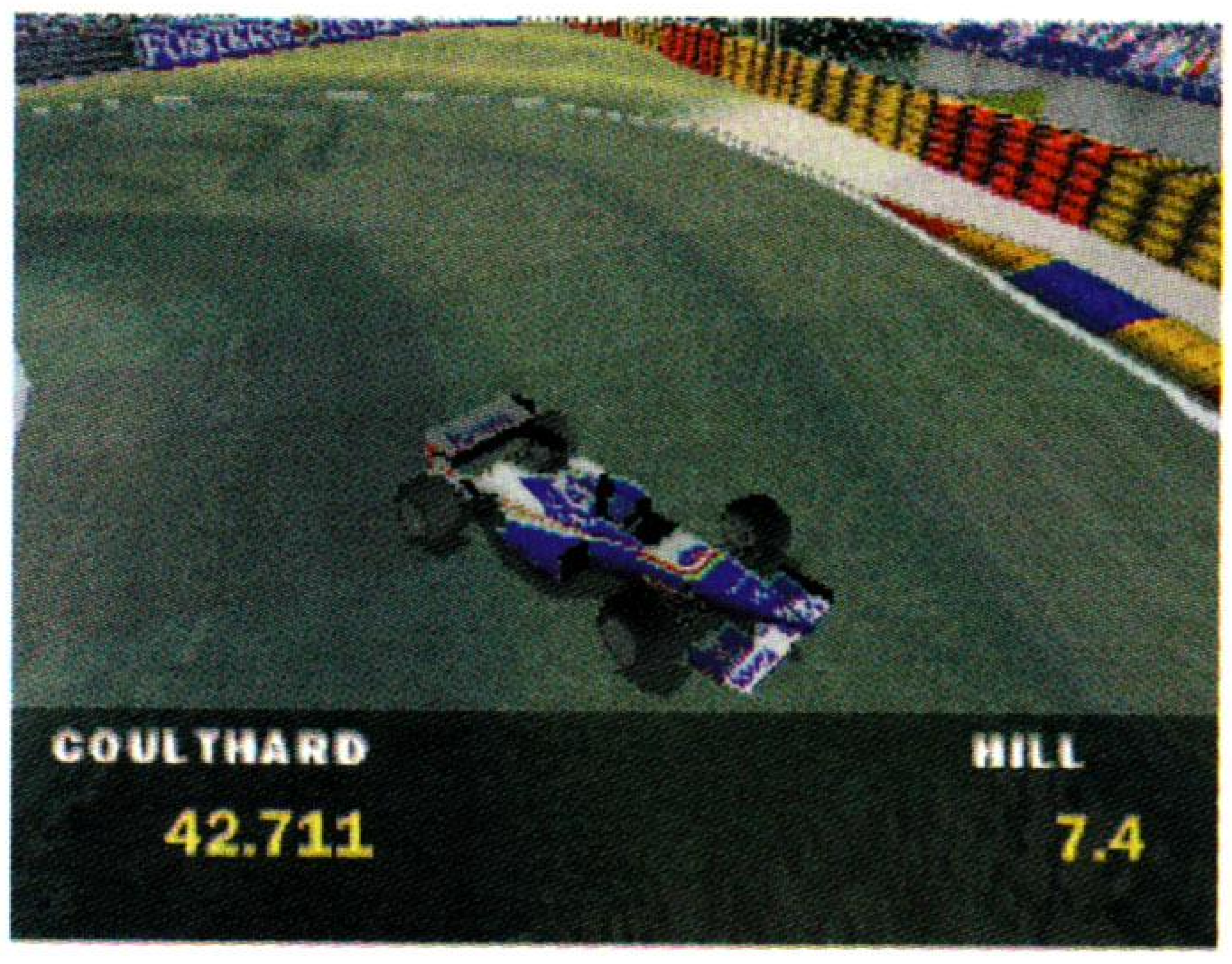


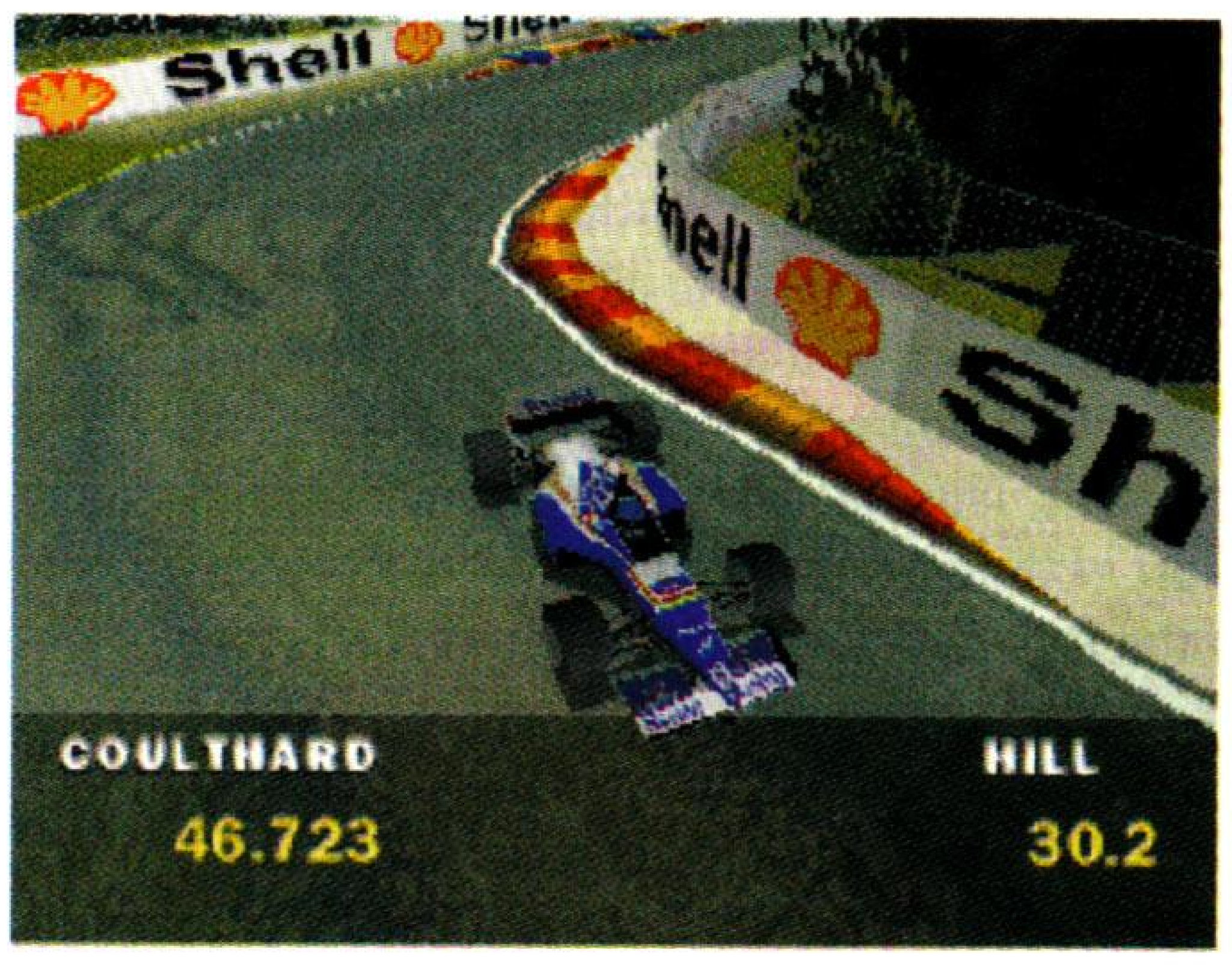


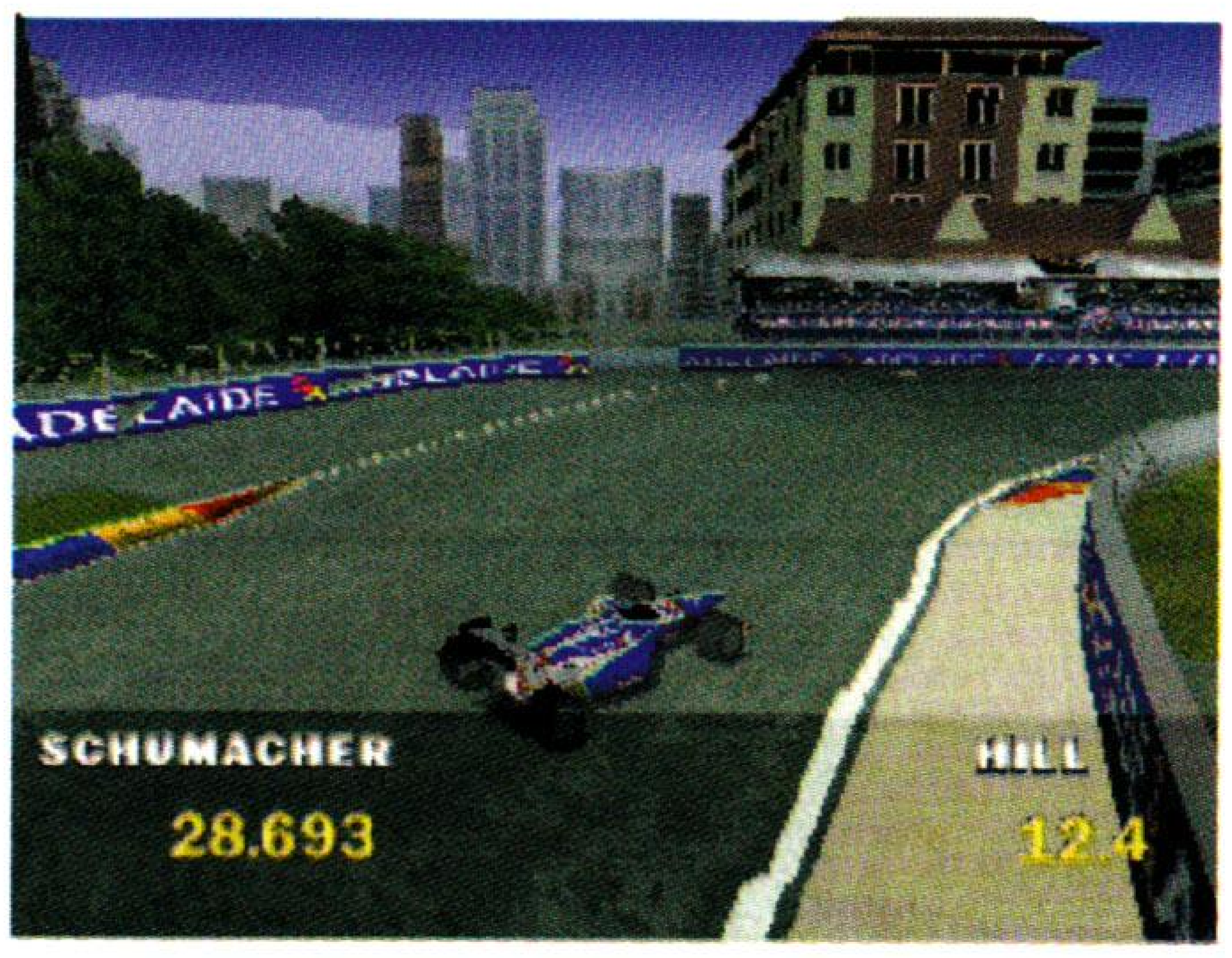
In their quest to make the ultimate racing game, Psygnosis appear to have all bases covered in their forthcoming game. **MAXIMUM**'s opinion of the first early alpha demo (one track, a few cars and little else) is of a potentially stunning road racer. One thing that budding Schumachers won't have to worry about is the sheer speed of the title. The game runs at a super-smooth 30 frames a second (that's the same as the Virtua Racing arcade machine) and features a level of quality to the graphics that competing games are going to have plenty of trouble matching. Psygnosis have crammed in all 17 courses from the actual Formula One season and the level of detail is astounding - the designers over at Bizarre Creations are comparing their work to actual video recordings of each track, the aim being to create a near-perfect digital replica of each world famous course in their PlayStation game. The results speak for themselves - although the screenshots are of an early version of the game, the finished tracks are expected to be comprised of between 60,000 to 90,000 individual polygons with lashings of well-designed texture-maps. Bizarre Creations spent a great deal of development time putting together a track editor that enables the F1 engine to feature maximum detail, whilst cutting down on the donkey work involved in creating courses of such complexity. Official help (via the licensers) in the form of surveyors' track map help provide accurate data on the widths of the road, the gradients on inclines and the like.



Swerve and slide around 17 different Formula One courses!
Take to the tarmac for the drive of your life! Test and take your racing skills to the limit!



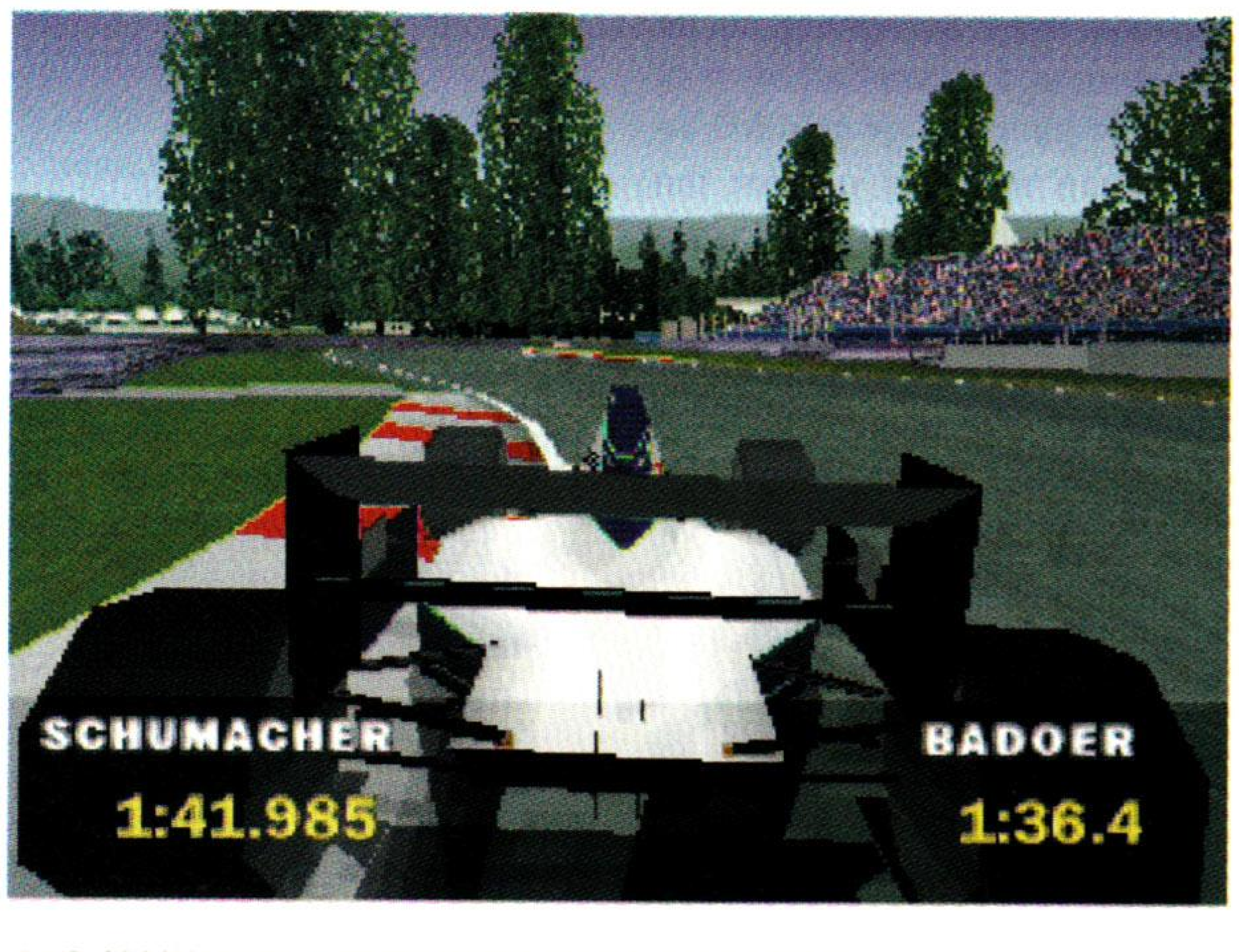




Two distinct versions of the gameplay are on offer. Arcade Mode is designed to be a feel-good, super-speedy road racing game which would appear to play quite closely to coin-op Virtua Racing (but imagine playing that with 17 "real" tracks). Simulation mode takes the arcade version but adds the kind of in-depth F1 frippery we have come to expect. Pre-race car customisation, race strategy, tyre and refuelling sections are all promised along with excellent effects such as changing weather, and car damage also find their way into this particular version of the game. Psygnosis are keen to point out that they aren't attempting a simulation with the depth of Microprose forthcoming F1GP2 - their game merely adds an extra layer of strategy as befits the F1 license.

AND THERE HE GOES...

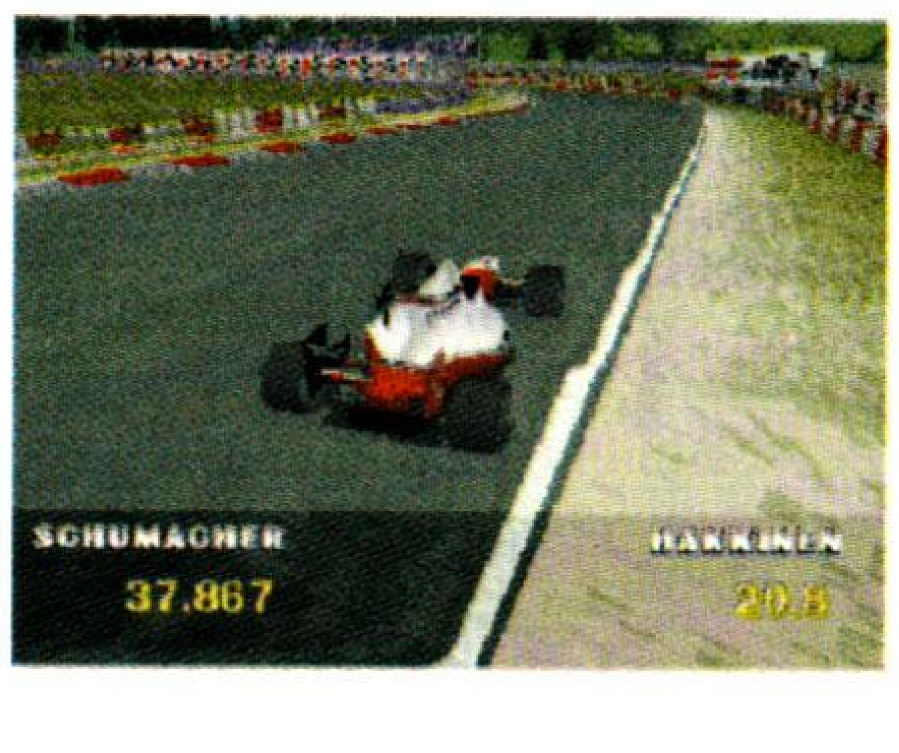
The king of motor racing commentary, Mr Murray Walker, was approached to record the voice-overs. He duly accepted, and MAXIMUM is happy to report that his many shouts and warblings add the final touch to this truly outstanding product.

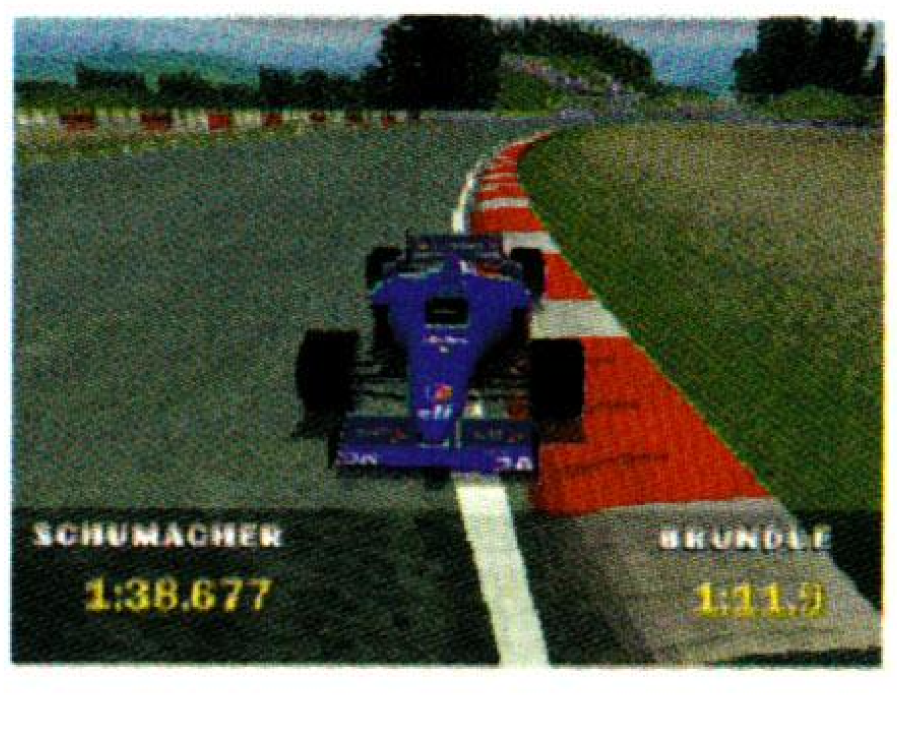


So real you can almost smell the burning rubber...!

CHOOSE YOUR VIEWS!

This wouldn't be a next-generation racing game without the option to change your view from a number of preset options. There are likely to be around four in the finished version, and once of the most spectacular definitely seems to be the tail fin view (left).





SCHUMACHER
BADOER
54.427
47.7

SCHUMACHER
ALESI
1:31.331
1:14.6

HILL
BLUNDELL
32.931
7.7

HAKKINEN
10.8

A MULTITUDE OF CARS!

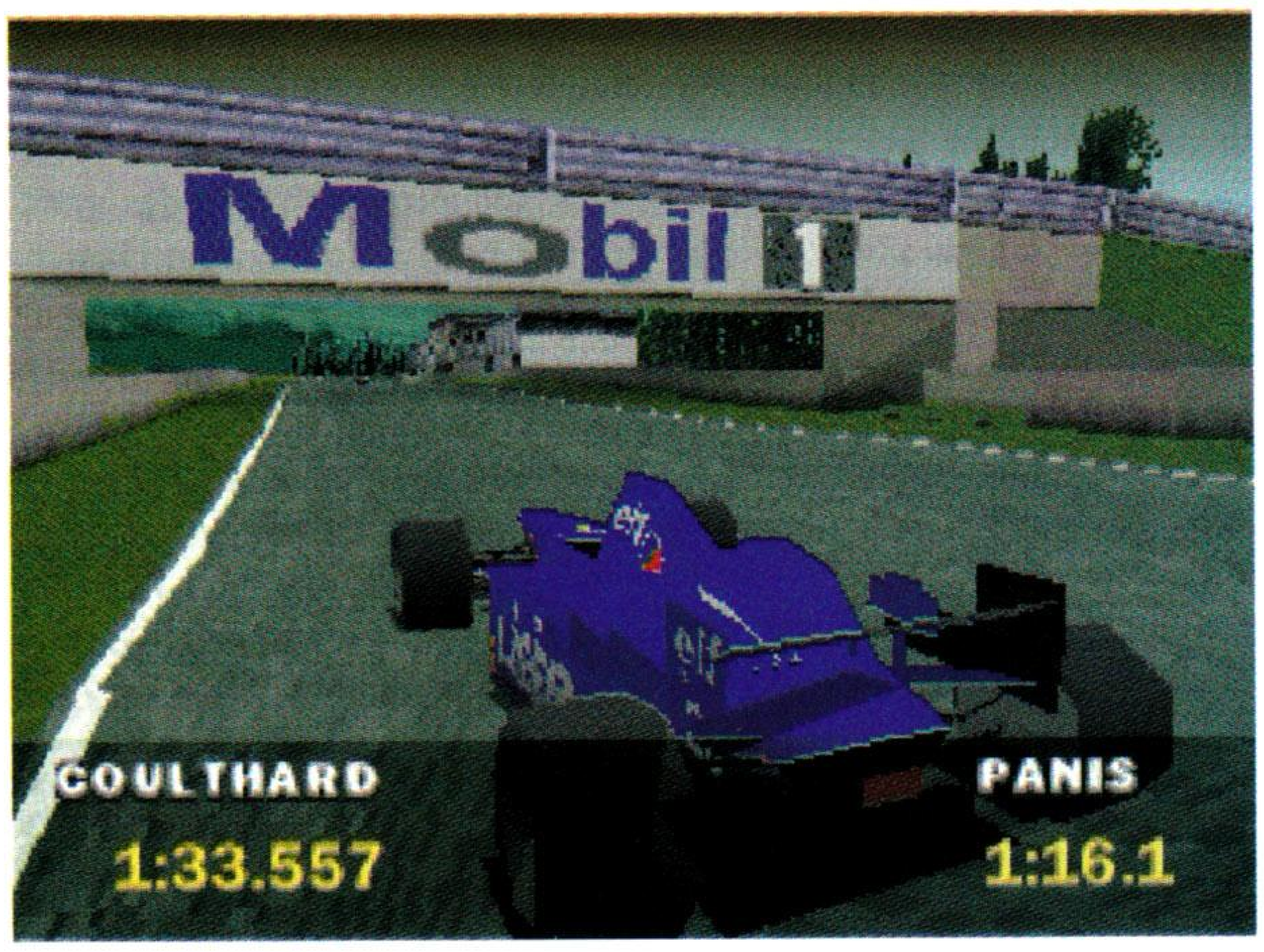
A number of Formula one racing vehicles are on offer, all of which can be tweaked to suit your racing style. However, there's always the arcade option too.

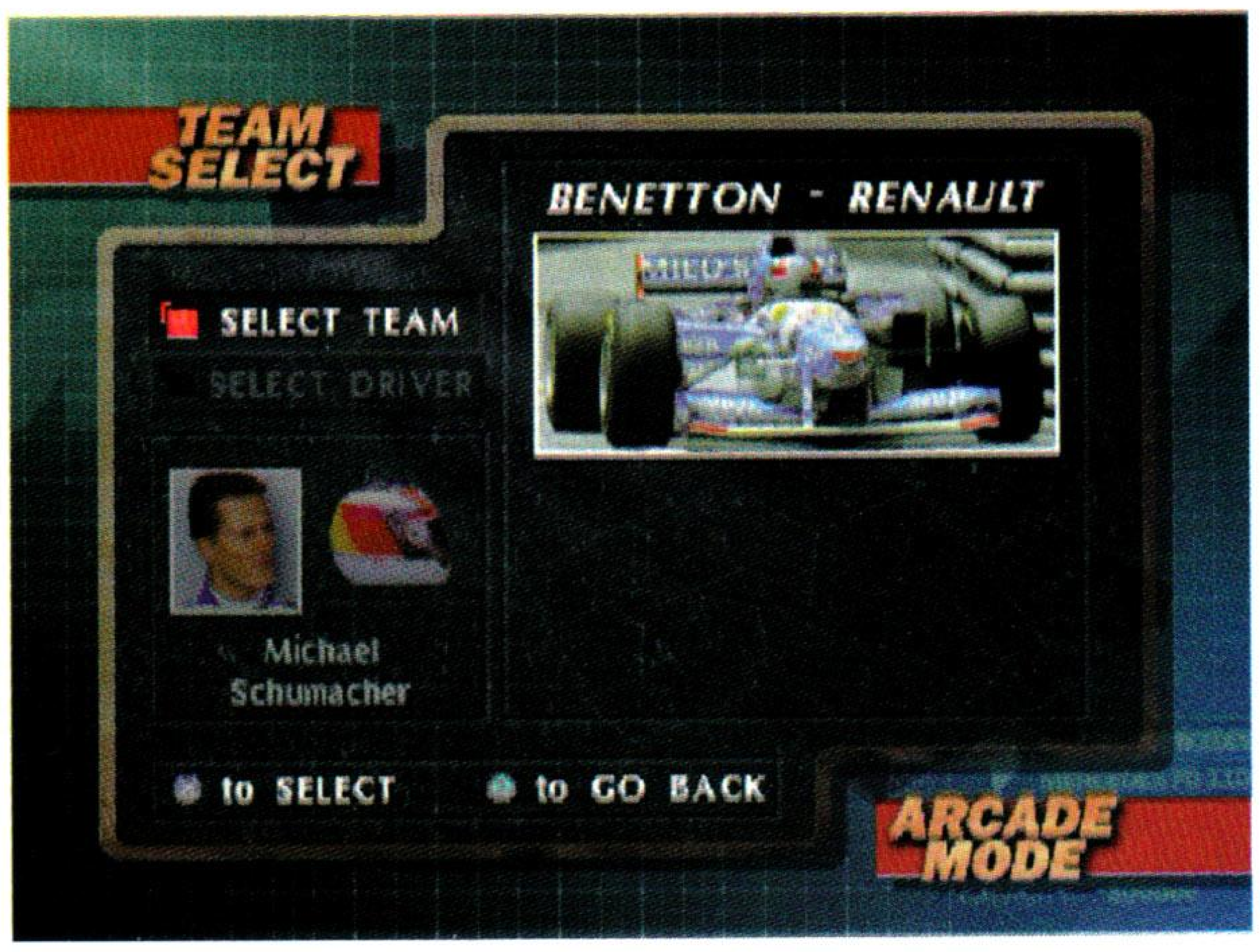
The thrill of the Formula One race is fully captured by the developing talents at Psygnosis!

COULTHARD
HAKKINEN
42.711
+0.372
1:47.879
TAG HEUER Official Timing

Although primarily designed as a speedy, arcade-style racer, the level of realism in Psygnosis' F1 is impressive. A collaboration with a top-flight racing team (which could well form a sub-license to the main F1 name) ensures much authenticity. Other features to look forward to include driver-specific artificial intelligence (some are clever, some dangerous - all of them going for that racing line) which is actually based on the characteristics of the real F1 drivers. This is obviously a key feature of the game and again, the license helps out immensely. Since F1 is licensed from the 1995 season, this means that all of the drivers (some 35 of them) can be included, so expect to see Nigel Mansell on the McLaren team - even though he only drove a couple of races in their car during that particular season.

On the aural side of things, F1 again seems to be a dream come true. In keeping with true WipeOut tradition, Psygnosis have licensed three tracks from famous US guitar artistes - check out contributions from Steve Vai and Joe Satriani. This is backed by 12 accomplished offerings from Psygnosis' own studio. In terms of sound effects, Psygnosis have taken a similar route to the original programmers of arcade Sega Rally, taking sound effects from a DAT recorder physically strapped to an F1 driver! Ambient sounds from the trackside and the pitlanes have also been recorded for maximum realism. The high-point of the sound has to be the now obligatory commentary. Murray Walker has provided *an hour's worth* of pertinent words, recorded in his own inimitable style. By using a combination of speech held in memory along with phrases stored on CD in the form of individual tracks, Psygnosis are confident of producing the best in-game commentary to date, which should lack the horrendous repetition factor witnessed in games like FIFA and Striker '96. Having checked out Murray's "script" **MAXIMUM** believes that they could well be right. It's touches like this which add extra authenticity that seem to be all-pervasive through the entire product. If Psygnosis' execution matches their ambitions for this product (and the talent is certainly there), we could well be looking at a future PlayStation Game of the Year. Rest assured, **MAXIMUM** will be following up on Bizarre Creations' work throughout subsequent issues right up until the planned July release.


Mobil 1
COULTHARD
PANIS
1:33.557
1:16.1

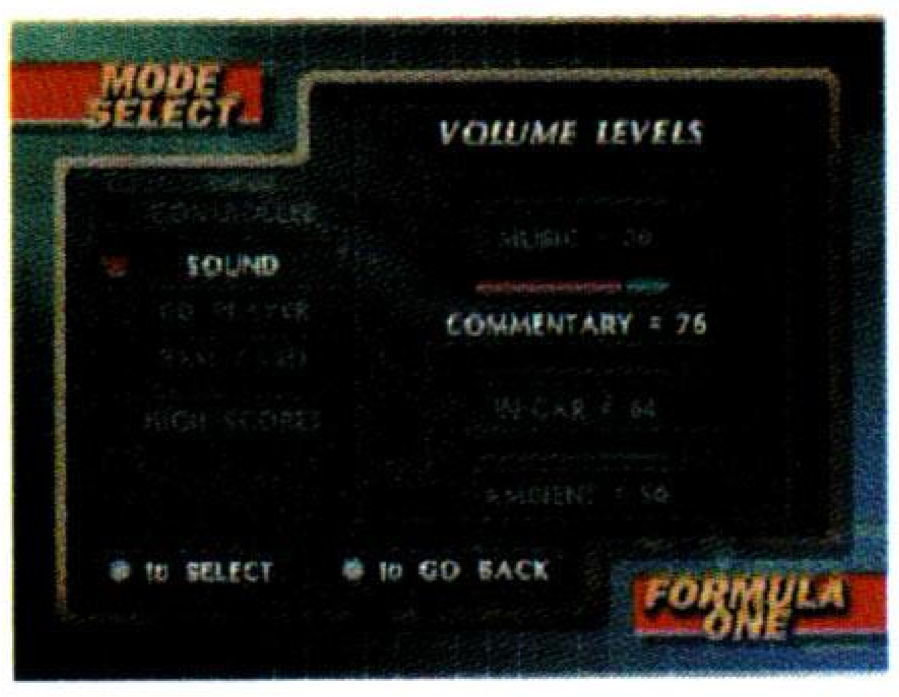

TEAM SELECT
BENETTON - RENAULT
SELECT TEAM
SELECT DRIVER
Michael Schumacher
to SELECT
to GO BACK
ARCADE MODE

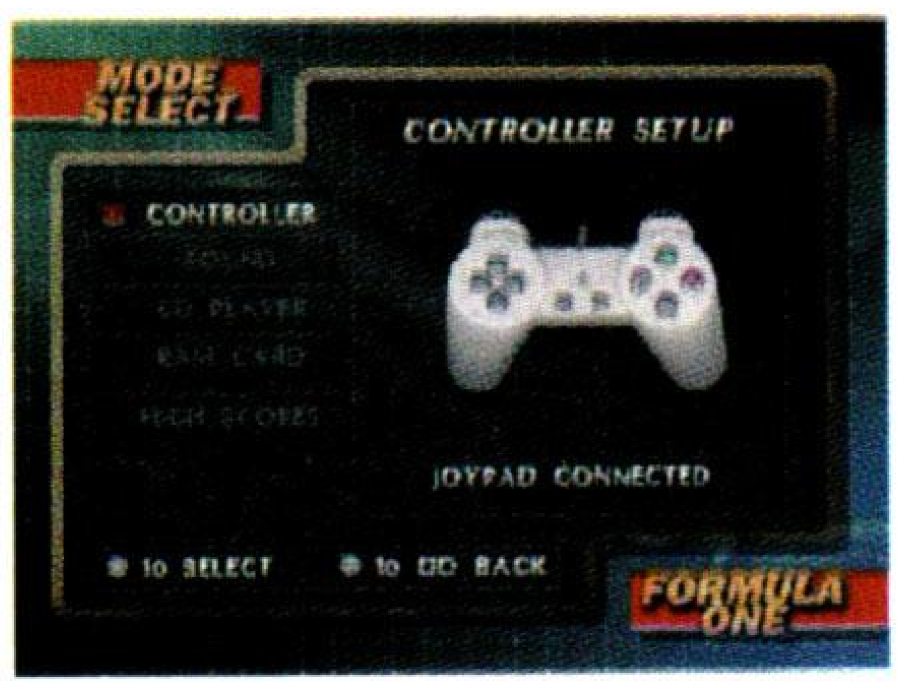
F1 SHORT STORIES

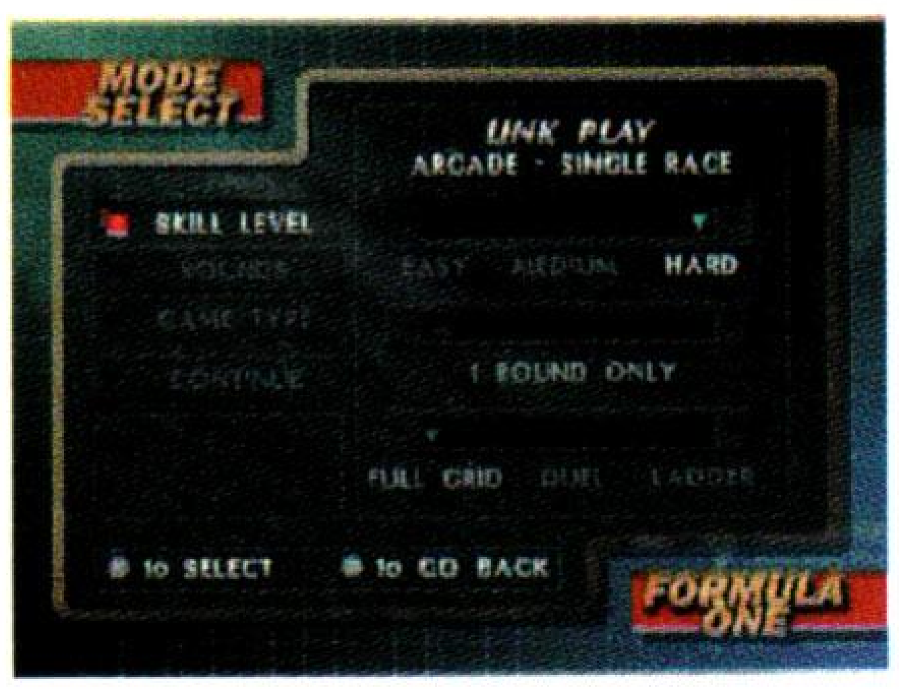
So how did a company like Bizarre Creations scoop the programming work for what must be one of Psygnosis' most prestigious titles of 1996? Although the name may not be familiar (not even to the all-knowing **MAXIMUM** team), the programmers have a fair degree of experience. Previous credits include highly original cutesy platformer Wiz 'n' Liz, and the innovative Amiga shooter Killing Game Show (which turned up on the Megadrive in the form of Fatal Rewind). Of course, F1 is the biggest project undertaken by the team to date, with a total of seven programmers, five graphic artists and a researcher currently hard at work.

Psygnosis have made a mark by fully supporting the link-up cable for the PlayStation - despite the lacklustre mini-release granted to the cable so far by Sony. Full link-up facilities have been confirmed by Psygnosis for F1, with the possibility of a split-screen two-player game also on the cards. A combination of split-screen and link-up is also being investigated, along the same lines of Electronic Arts' forthcoming Need For Speed PlayStation conversion.

Although Psygnosis currently own the license to develop Formula One on PlayStation only - however, all going well, conversions for other platforms (probably beginning with PC) should be forthcoming in the future. Expect tweaked features suitable for the relevant platform (such as enhanced network facilities on the PC game).


MODE SELECT
VOLUME LEVELS
SOUND
COMMENTARY = 75
to SELECT
to GO BACK
FORMULA ONE


MODE SELECT
CONTROLLER SETUP
CONTROLLER
JOYPAD CONNECTED
to SELECT
to GO BACK
FORMULA ONE


MODE SELECT
LINK PLAY
ARCADE - SINGLE RACE
SKILL LEVEL
EASY
MEDIUM
HARD
1 ROUND ONLY
FULL GRID
DUEL
LADDER
to SELECT
to GO BACK
FORMULA ONE

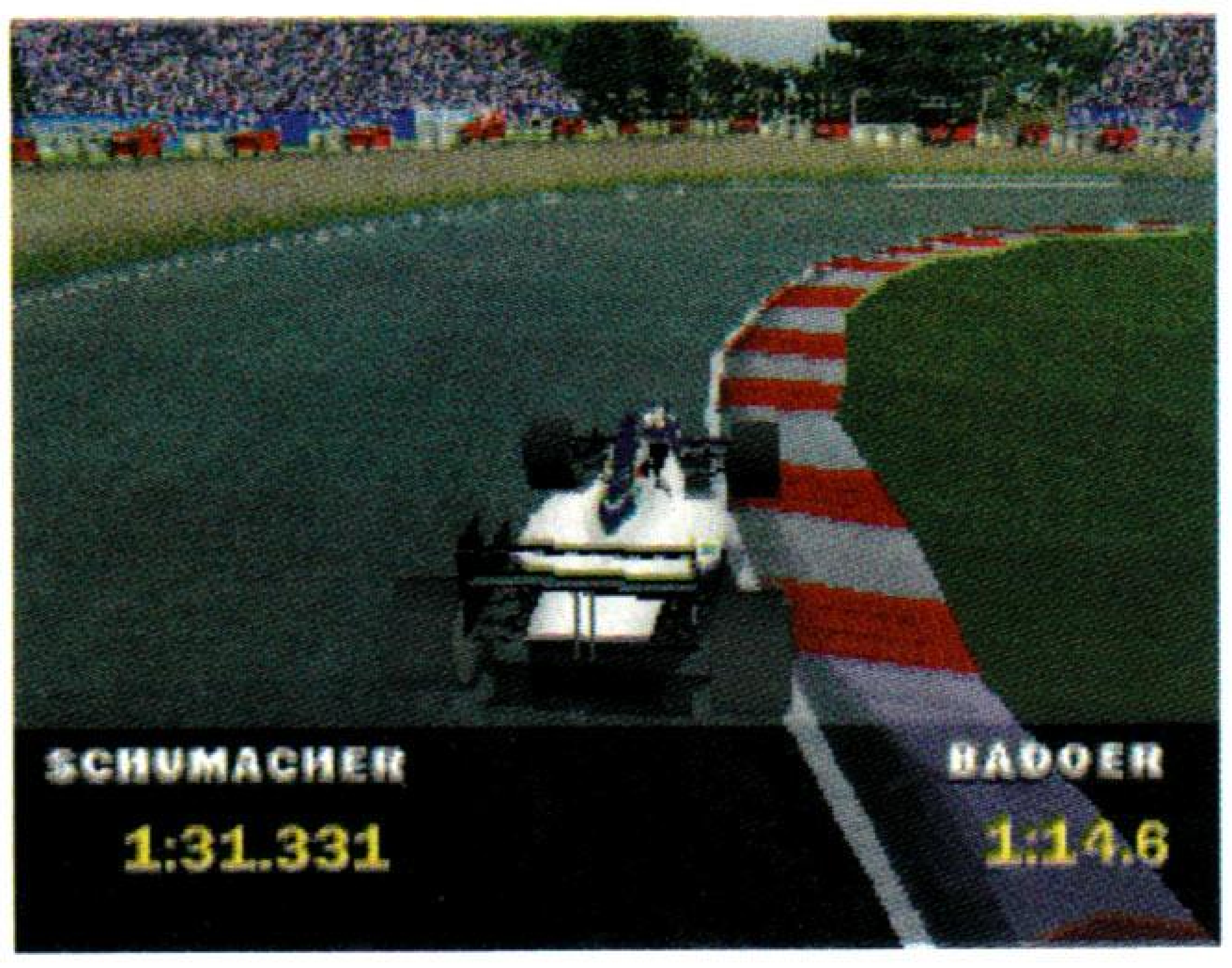
OPTION SCREENS APLENTY!

This being a grade A software release, prospective buyers can look forward to plenty of tweakings to suit personal taste. Even more exciting is the proposed link-up option which could catapult this title right up there, even surpassing the quality of WipeOut.

A possible PlayStation Game of the Year in the making!

More courses and more detailed graphics than any other console racer!

SCHUMACHER
BADOER
42.711
34.4


SCHUMACHER
BADOER
1:31.331
1:14.6

STUNNING REPLAYS!

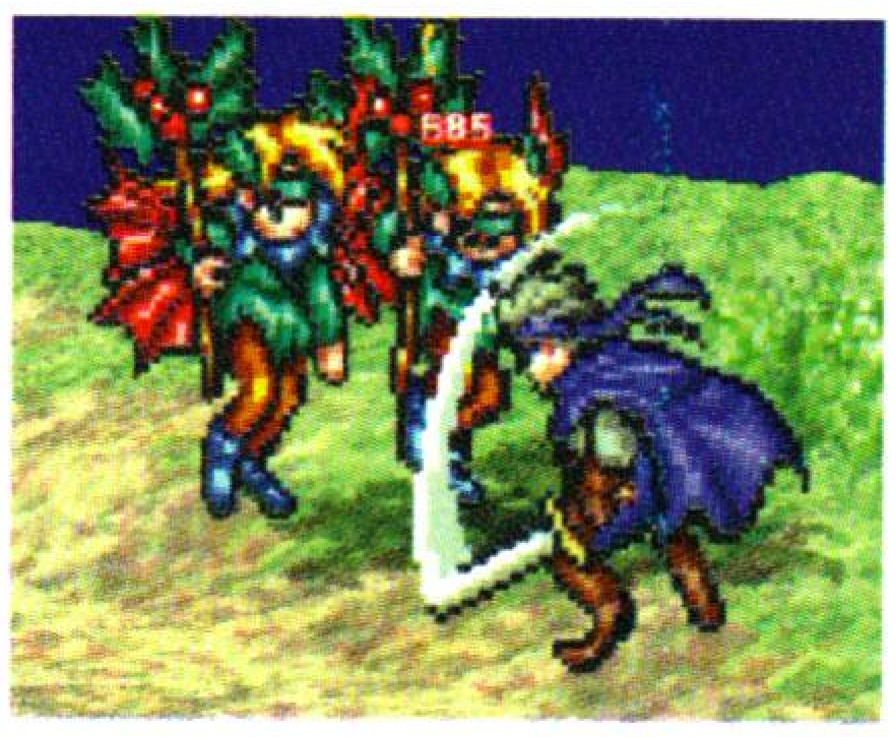
In the demo version we saw, Psygnosis had thoughtfully included a special feature that allowed a replay of the race to be viewed from any angle. We could zoom into the cockpit, or view the race from a blimp's eye view. We expect this excellent feature to be included in the final version.

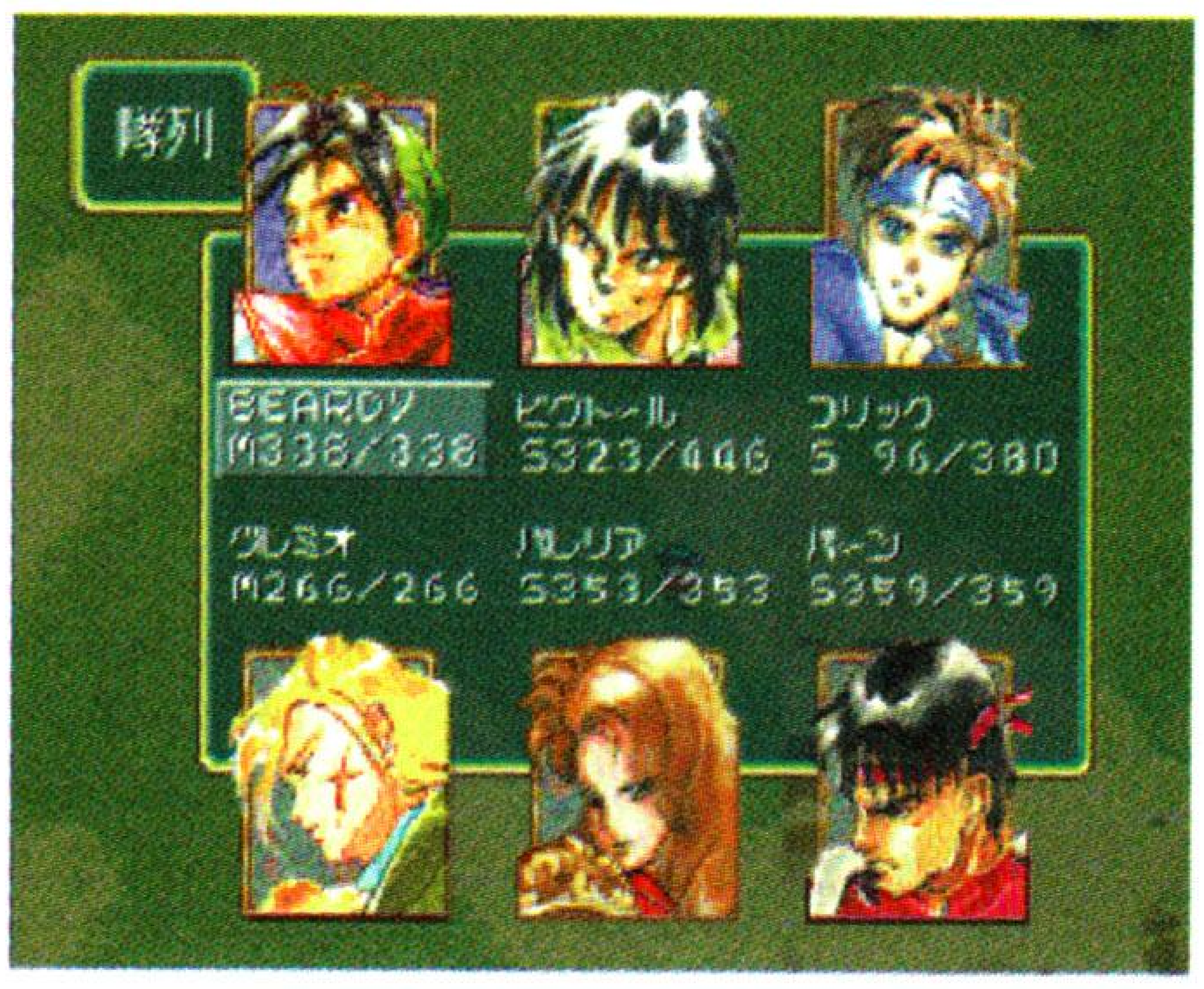
PS
KONAMI
ANOTHER AWESOME RPG!
GENSO SUIKODEN
AVAILABLE NOW IN **JAPAN**

ROLE-ING START!

GENSO SUIKODEN

Sony's decision to grant King's Field 2 an official UK release sometime this year might well prompt PlayStation owners with a passion for RPGs to wonder what's to follow. Well, despite plenty of next generation 3D adventure games already available in Japan it's Konami's recently released warriors' saga Genso Suikoden that looks the most promising.





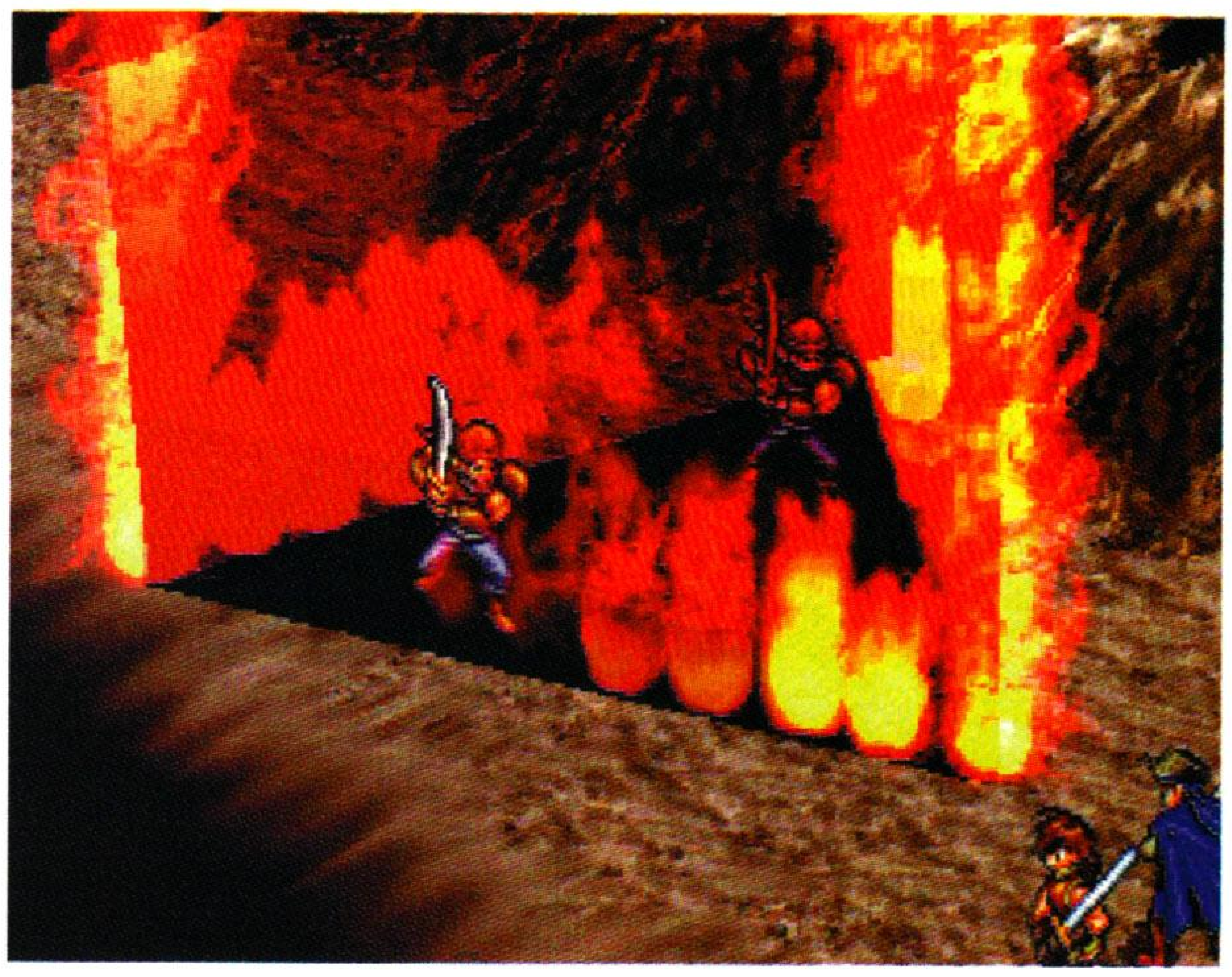
A PARTY TO END ALL PARTIES
The characters you choose affect your home castle.

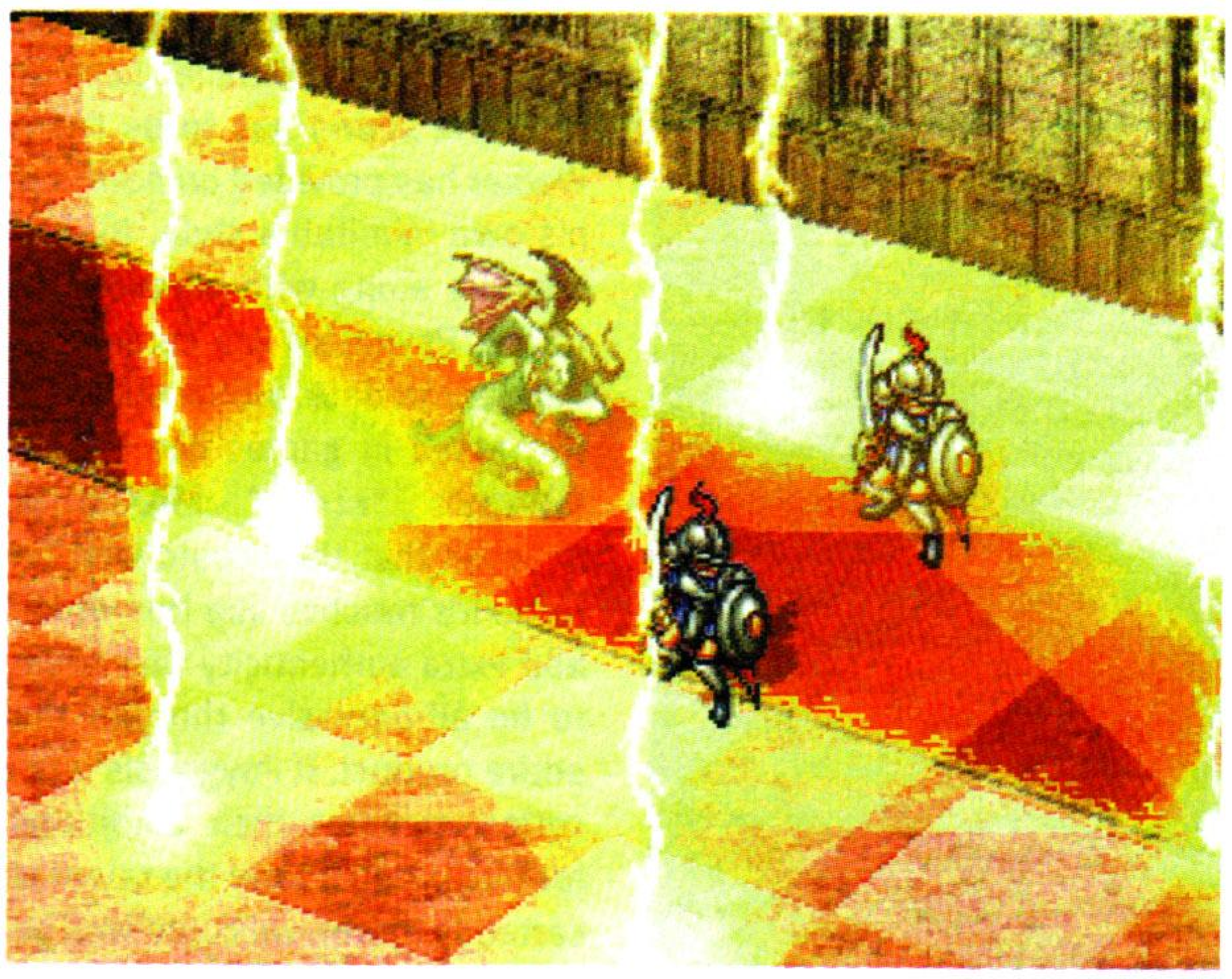
Let it be said that Konami are without a doubt one of the most creative and talented developers in the world. A string of hits on both arcade and console formats since the mid-80's has ensured the companies association with well-designed, imaginative software. The side-scrolling shooter Gradius became an instant classic when it debuted in the arcades and was the obvious choice to become the very first shooting game available for the Super Nintendo. Since that time Konami have enjoyed massive success on the console formats so obviously **MAXIMUM** expected great things when they announced plans to develop for the 32-bit platforms.

Unfortunately Konami have had a rather slow start into the next generation marketplace with only a handful of mediocre coin-op conversions including the well worn-out Parodius and Twin Bee to name but two. Only now, a year since the new hardware was released in Japan are we getting a glimpse of Konamiís true potential with a new wave of original titles, the most promising of which is Genso Suikoden, an exciting RPG loosely based upon the famous Chinese novel Suikoden.

Just this month Konami in Japan announced a nostalgia fan's dream collection - the Gradius Deluxe Pack. In a similar vein to the Parodius CD currently available, this brings together Gradius (known as Nemesis over here) and its sequel and presents them all in one pack. That means you get the seminal Nemesis (the first game to feature an advanced icon power-up system), along with its vertical/horizontally scrolling follow-up Salamander - unfortunately, the graphically superb Vulcan Venture is missing. Since the **MAXIMUM** team embrace such nostalgic releases warmly, we were immensely disappointed to learn that the Gradius Deluxe Pack is not to be granted an official European release.

Up to 108 different allies to recruit in this Konami classic!



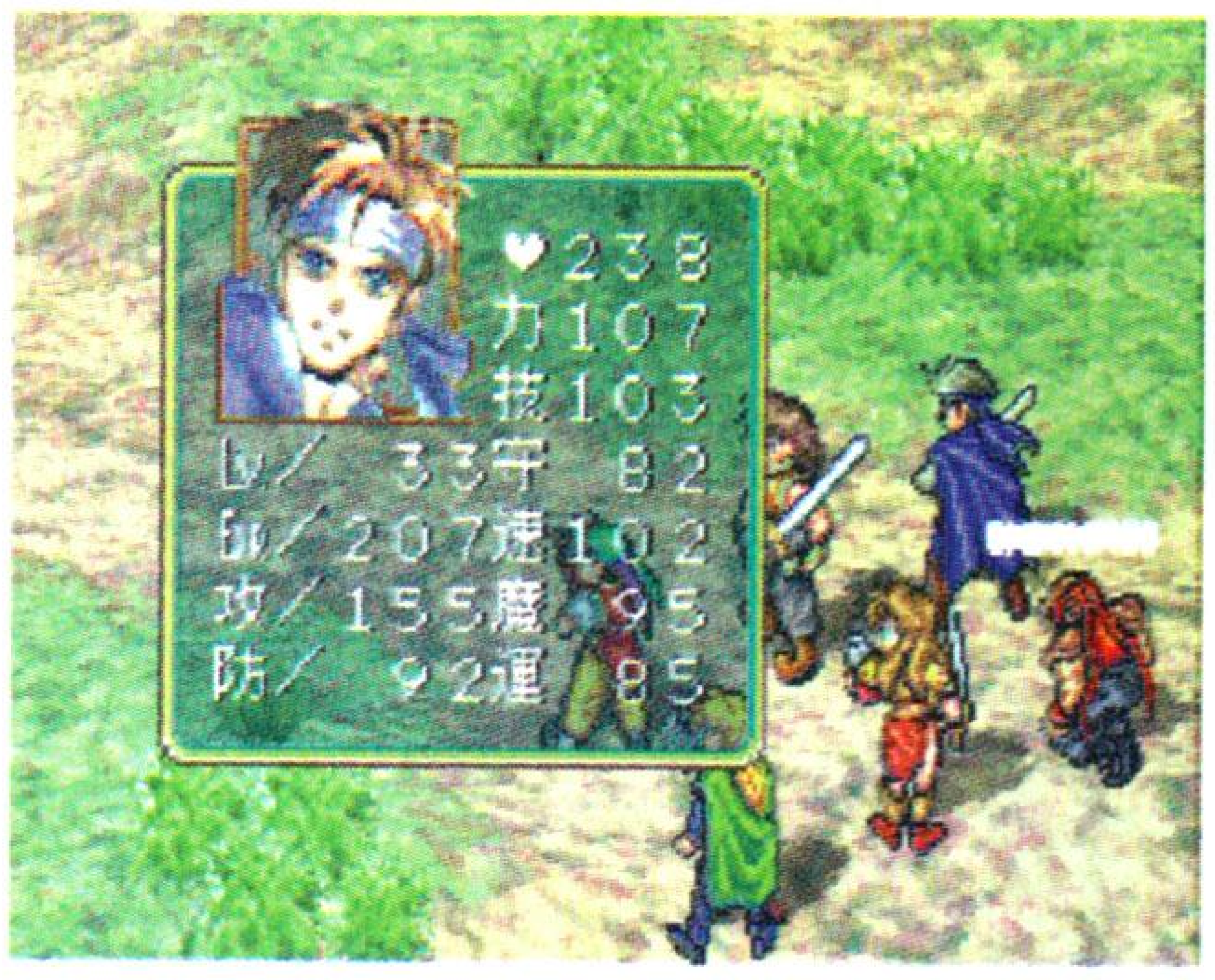


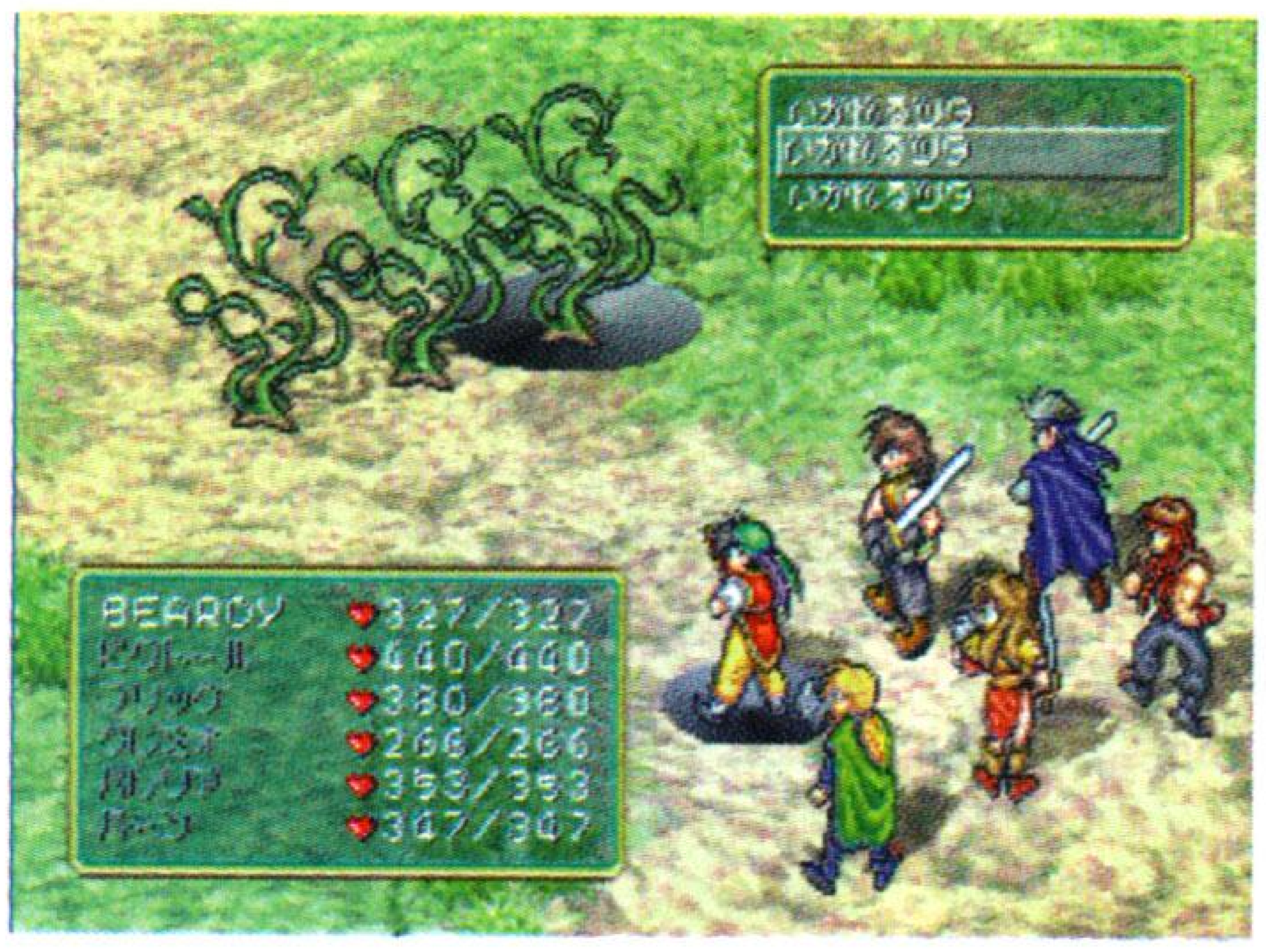
DEVASTATING COMBAT ACTION!
The battling action really works well in Genso Suikoden.

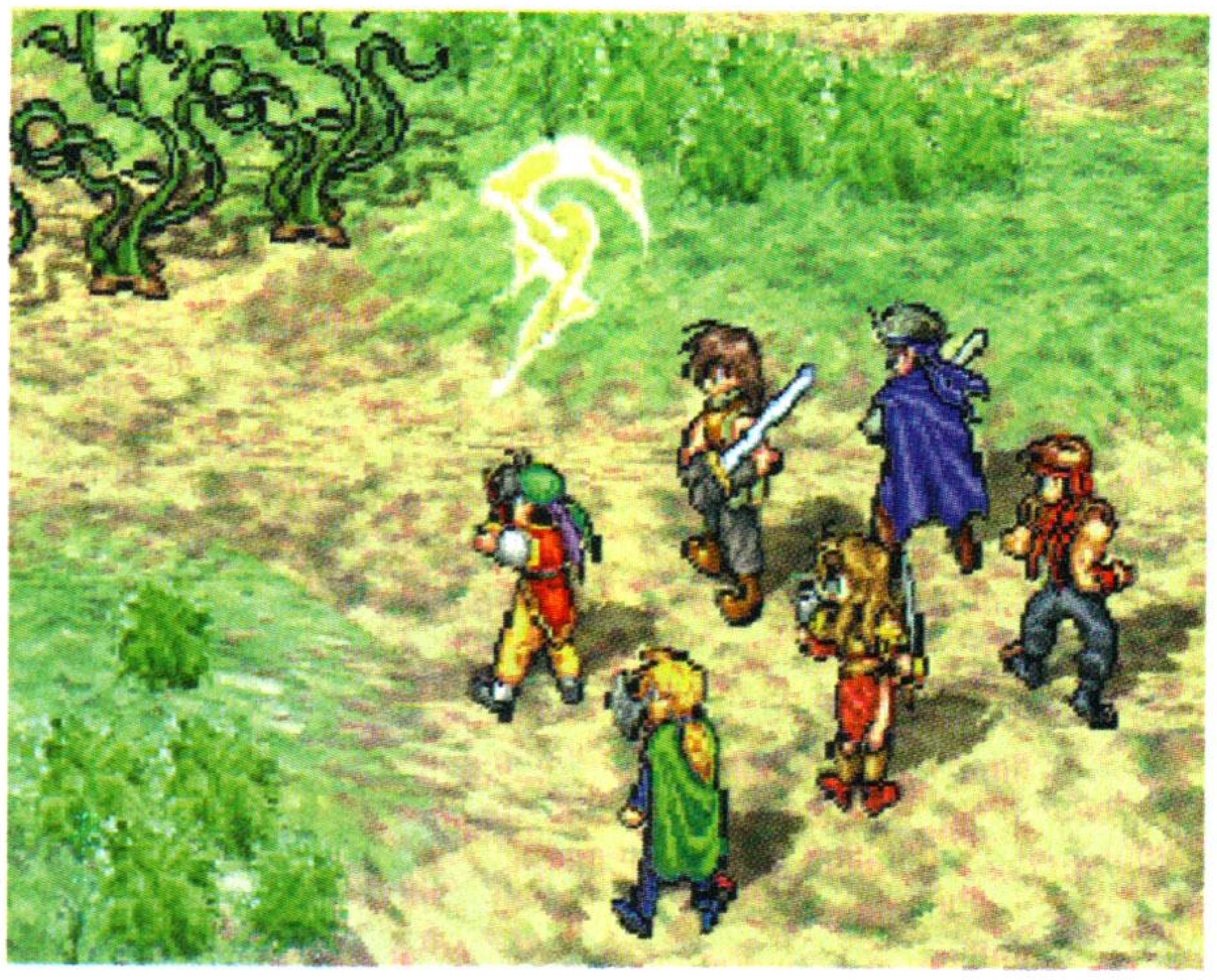
When **MAXIMUM** caught its first glimpse of Genso Suikoden in Japanese PlayStation magazines, we weren't that impressed. The few pictures shown revealed a game with 2D graphics and a decidedly 16-bit feel that has more in common with the Super Famicom than what we had come to expect from the PlayStation. This isn't such a bad thing for the Japanese who don't expect awesome visuals in their RPGs, but it is going to take a lot more than that to convince UK gamers who have been brought up into the 32-bit world by the likes of WipeOut and Tekken.

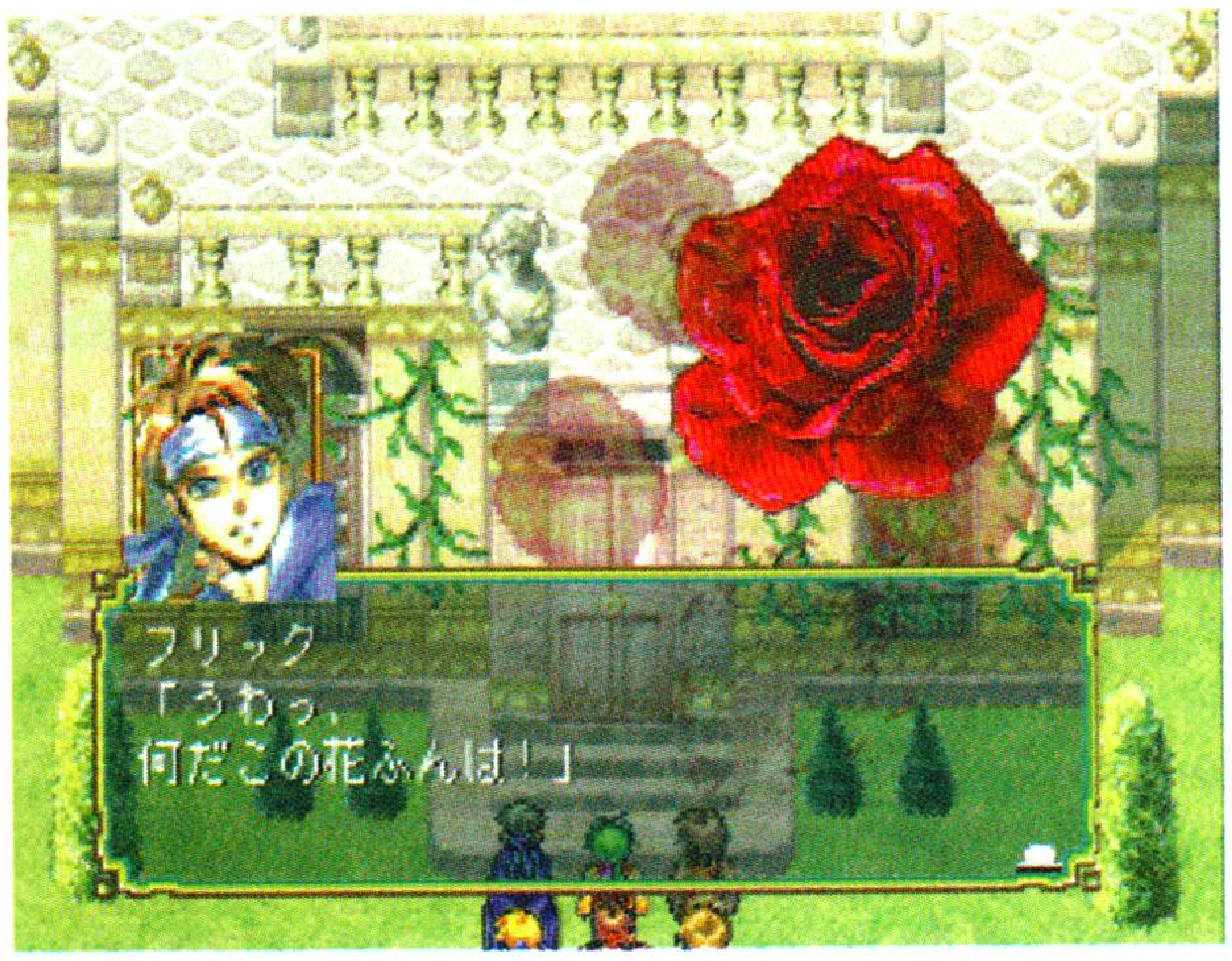
We have now taken possession of a completed version of the game and after the expected and thorough playtesting that only **MAXIMUM** can provide, it's safe to say that Genso Suikoden is actually a lot better than it looks. An intriguing storyline is brought to life with colour-

STATS-- GREAT
At first your stats are weedy.

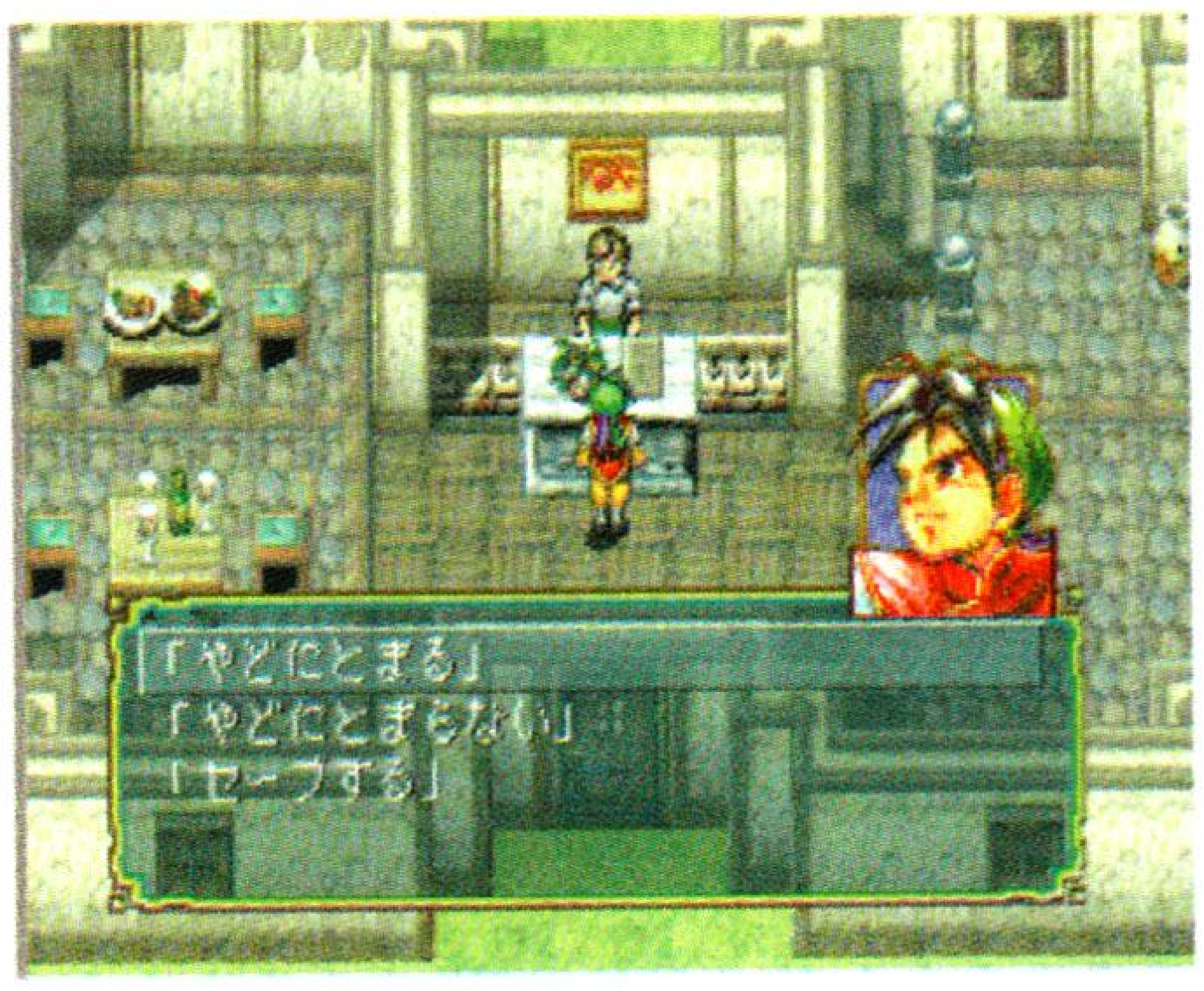


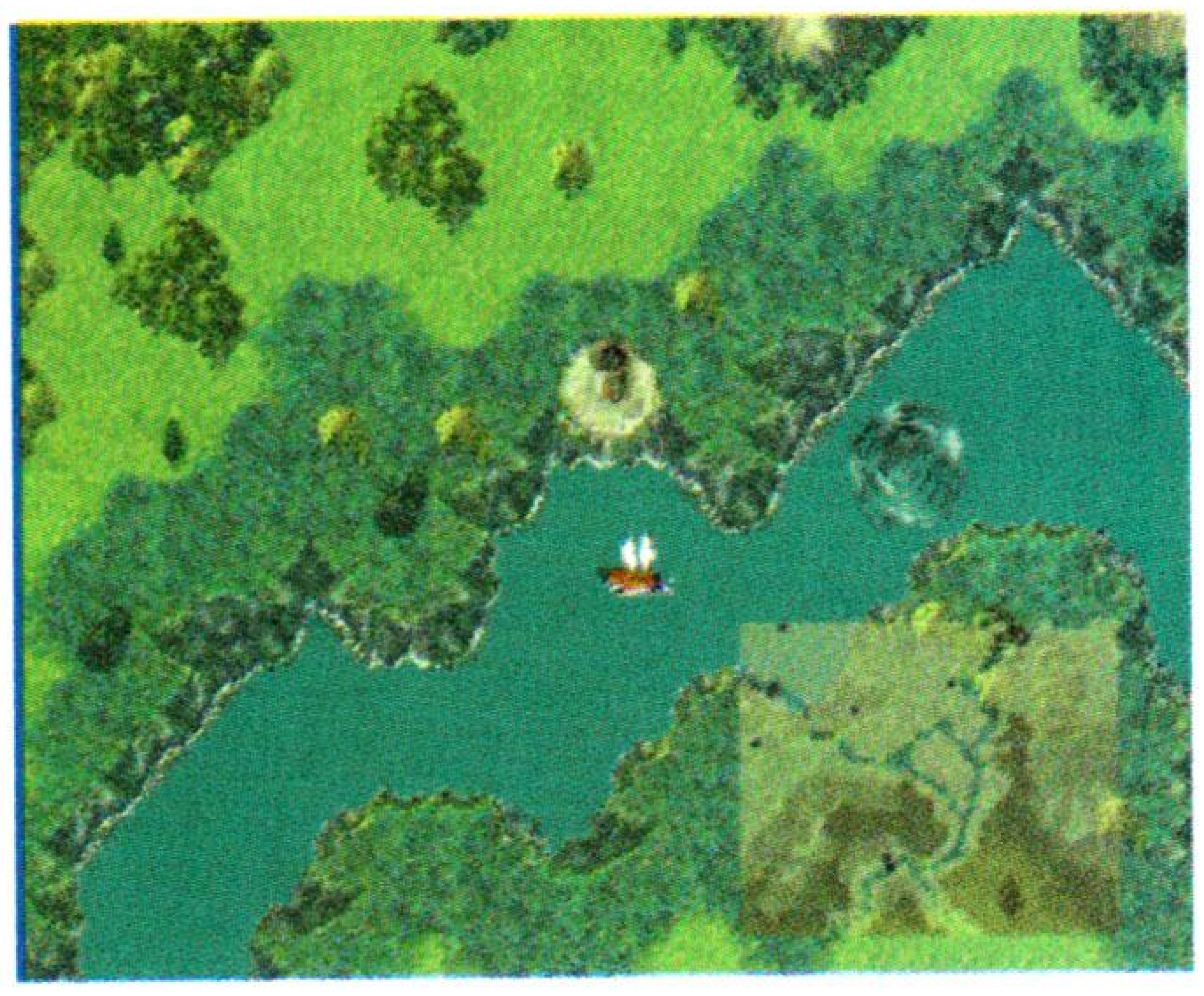






フリック
「うわっ、
何だこの花ふんは！」





CASTLE ACTION

Castles are very important in this RPG - visiting others can lead to the great "War Event" battles.

ful graphics and spiced up with a new battle system that is incredible to behold. The game has so many features it could easily make Extended Play status but for the purpose of this news feature we've decided to stick to the main features you'll find in the title.

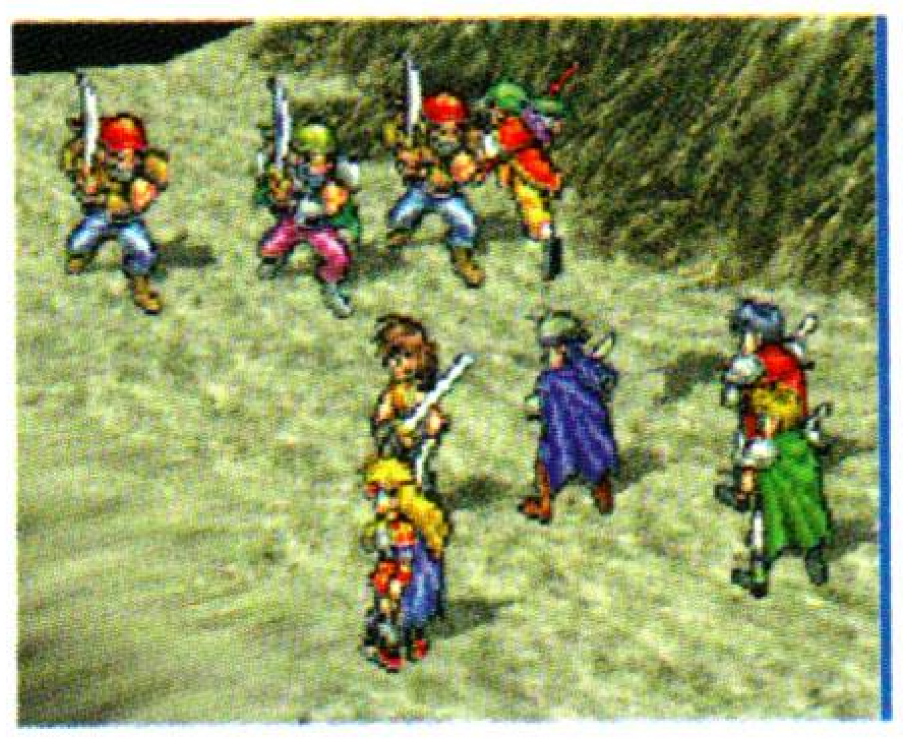
Genso Suikoden manages to incorporate the vast exploration and puzzle-solving of the typical role-playing game, but increases the scope of combat to previously undreamt of levels. There's no doubting the game's variety - up to 108 different characters can join your party, and each has their own specialised attributes. The game utilises the PlayStation's 3D capabilities in providing various zooming in and out activities along with some spectacular special effects. These crop up when you use the magic system, which results in some positively mind-bending effects. Also evident here is plenty of attention-to-detail - something which we really appreciate here at **MAXIMUM**. For example, use a freeze spell and the surrounding trees will start to develop icicles.

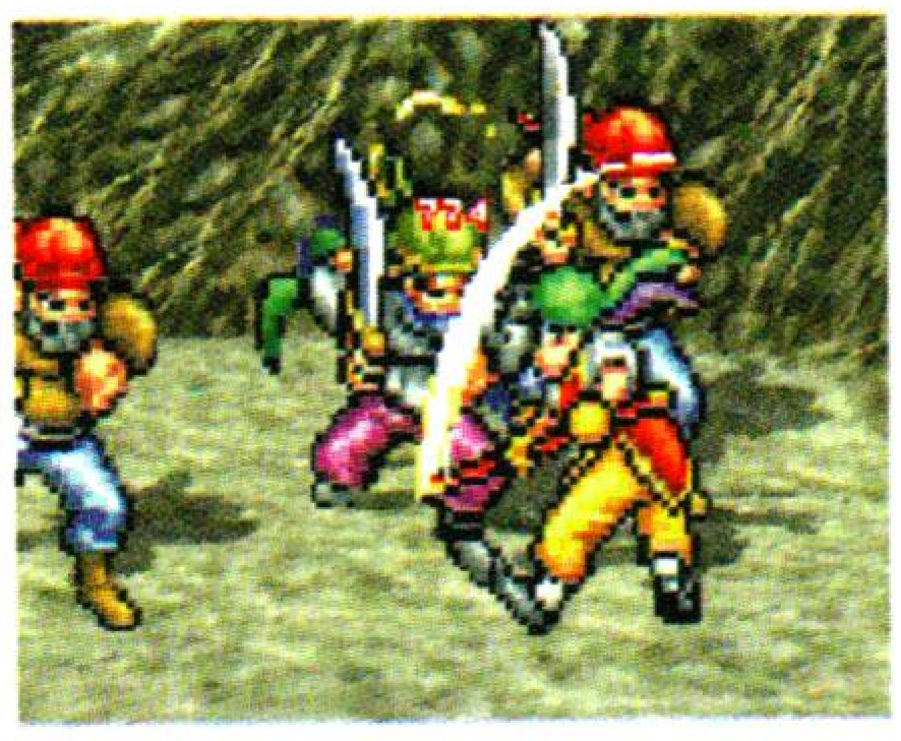
Additionally, you also have your own castle, which grows as you attract followers. The plan of your castle changes according to your party line-up. For example, if you have a weaponsmith in your line-up, the chances are that he'll open up an armoury in your castle.

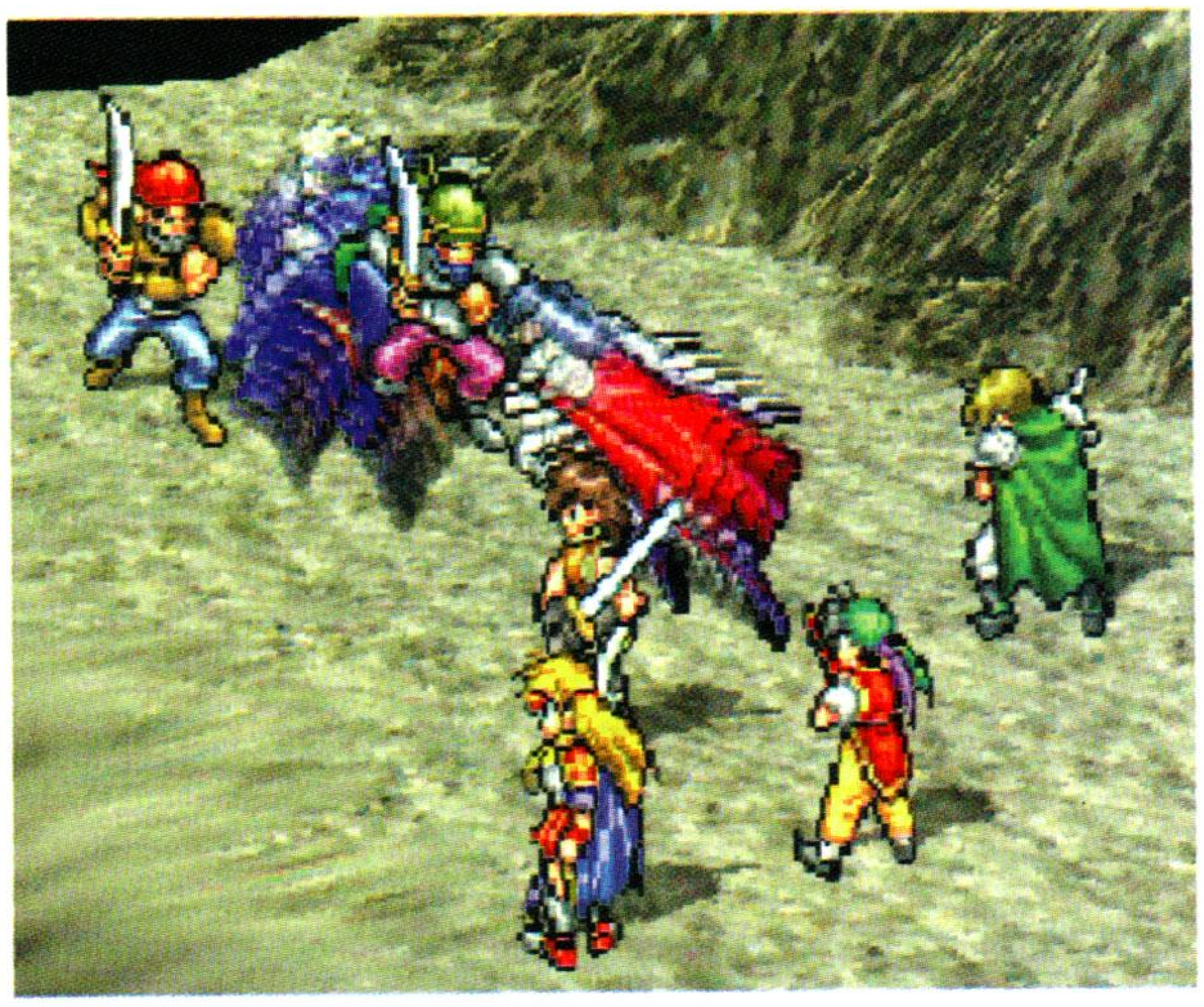
This system also paves the way for one of the title's most enjoyable features - the army battles. Either by attacking an enemy castle or defending your own, you are drawn into a huge battlefield, where hundreds of characters (represented by mini-sprites on-screen) slug it out. Of course, the magic system can also be used here, with some spells able to wipe out scores of enemies.

AWESOME FIGHTS!

Hand-to-hand combat makes great use of zooming camera angles and sprite-scaling.







Innovative new battle scenarios as the "War Events" take place!

It must be said that there is a considerable lack of quality role-playing games on the next generation systems (surprising since this is the most popular genre in Japan), but slowly the PlayStation is emerging as having the more superior titles. King's Field and its sequels were all well received and are excellent games, whilst the future looks extremely bright for the Sony machine, what with the recent news that SquareSoft are intent on bringing their celebrated Final Fantasy games to the Sony machine.

Still, until they come along, **MAXIMUM** heartily recommends that you check out Genso Suikoden. If the thought of all that Japanese text puts you off, have no fear as Konami are preparing an English translation of the game which should be granted a European release - all going well. It'll doubtless be renamed for this market, so keep an eye on **MAXIMUM** news for further details.

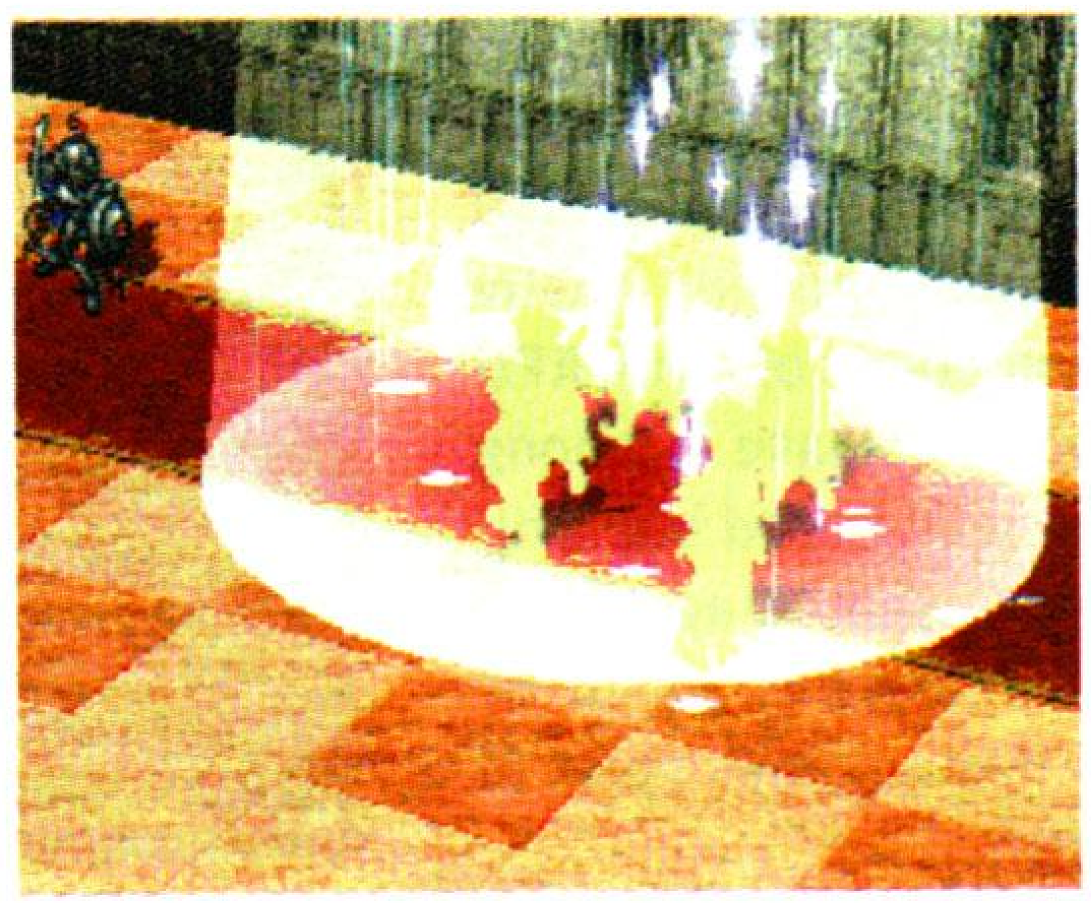
Mega-CD title, Snatcher, is appearing on Saturn. An anime style adventure peppered with sex and violence, this one should go down well with just about everyone. PlayStation owners can expect a translation of sequel Policenauts.

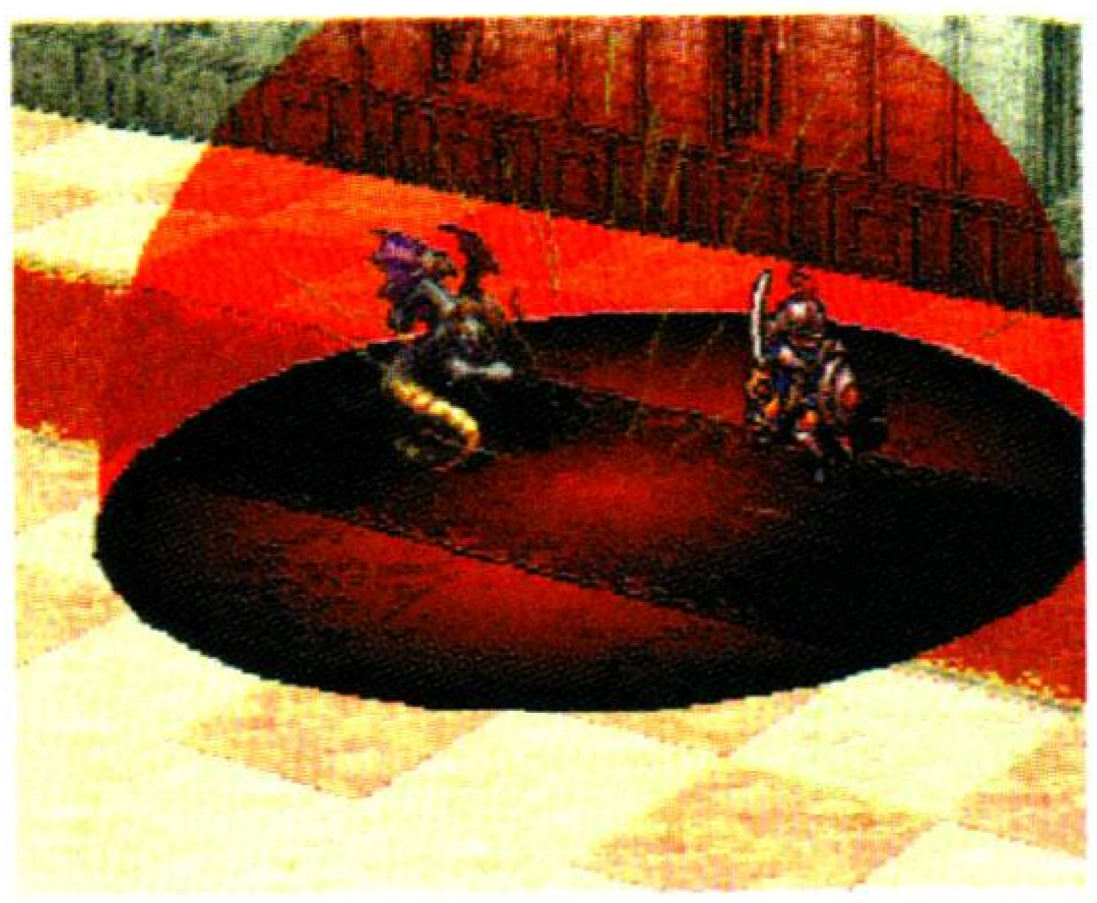
At the recent ATEI, Konami unveiled their latest coin-ops, Crypt Killers, Midnight Run and the absolutely enormous Road Rage were well-received. The latter title (previously known as Speed King) has an absolutely huge dedicated cabinet capable of spinning nearly 360 degrees, and even has a seat for another passenger.

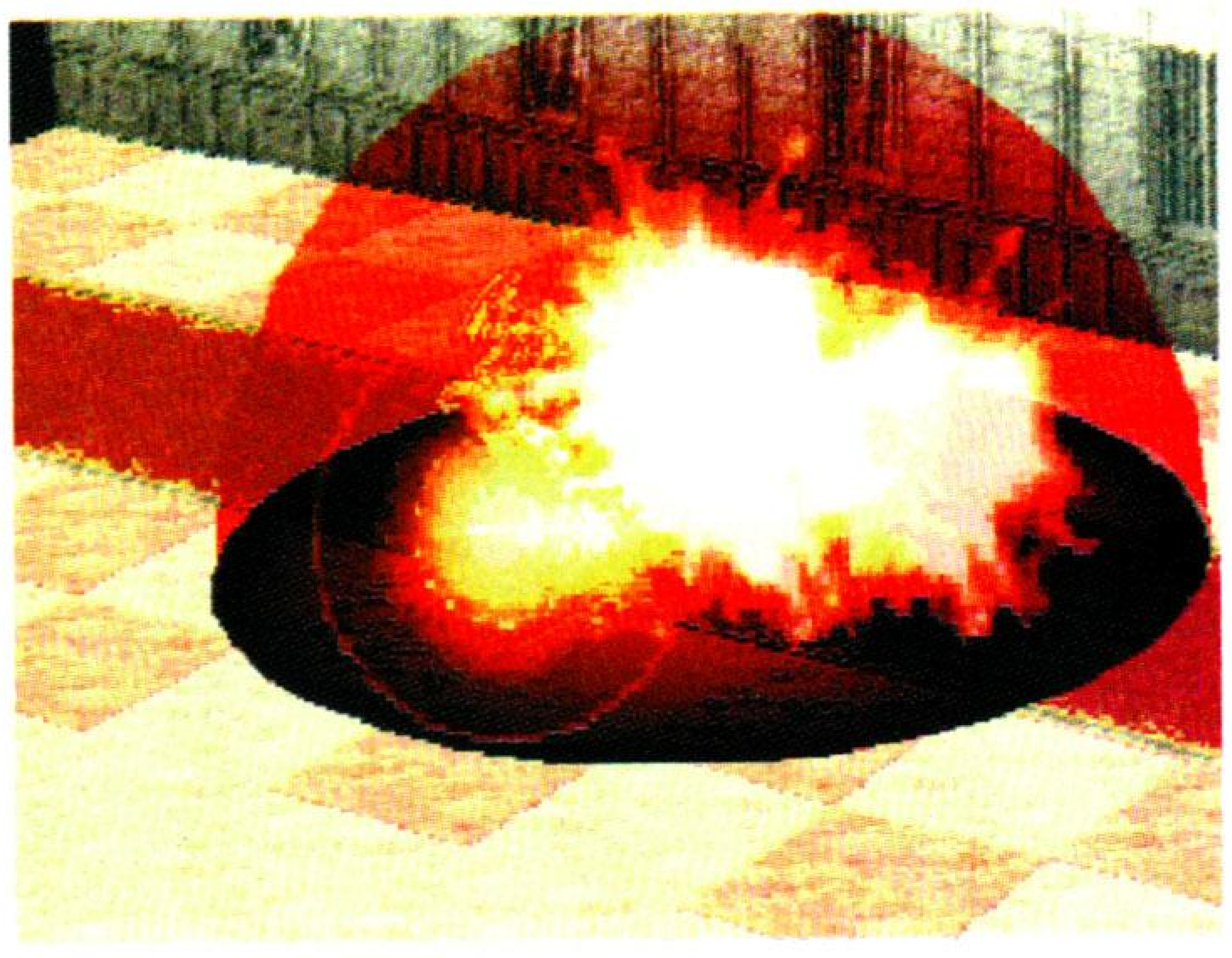
Two new Konami coin-ops in development: a new Winning Eleven title, but a lot more exciting is the announcement of Salamander 2 - a sequel in itself to the original Nemesis/Gradius classic!

BOOM!

Some magical spells supply some absolutely stunning conflagrations on-screen.







IT'S A KIND OF MAGIC

The PlayStation's visual power is put to work in a series of battle-orientated scenarios (right).

SS THE LATEST IN THE SHINING FORCE SERIES
SHINING WISDOM
CLIMAX
AVAILABLE SOON IN **JAPAN** PRICE **TBA**

SHINING FORCE FOR SATURN!

SHINING WISDOM

One of the premiere role-playing games for Megadrive had to be Shining Force - the combat-orientated role-playing game. After several sequels (including Mega-CD and Game Gear versions), Climax are ready to unleash a Saturn translation...

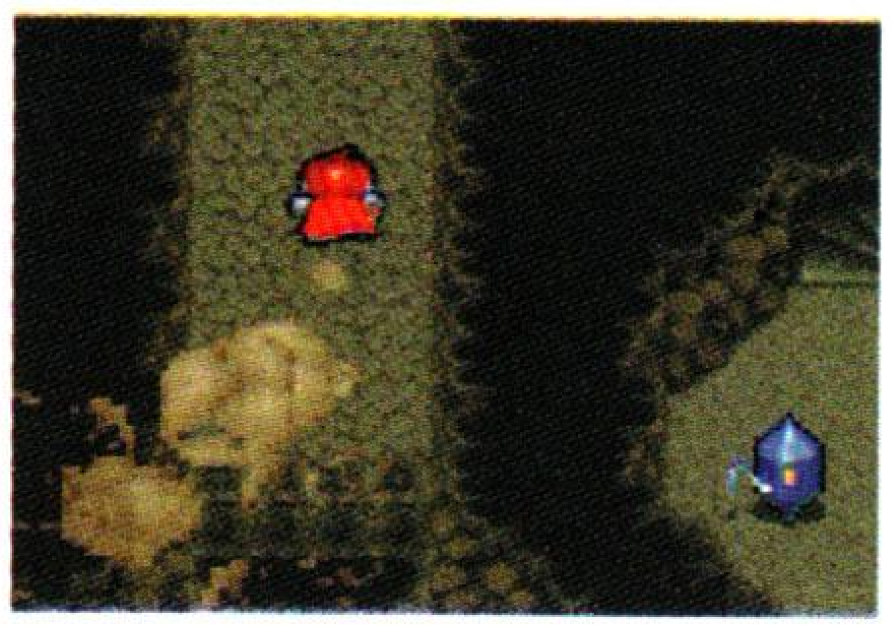
Climax, the team behind the brilliant Shining Force RPG series on the Megadrive have jumped on the 32-bit bandwagon, and abandoned Sega's 16-bit for an all-new adventure on the Saturn. The Shining Force series has always been very popular in the UK, as the storylines and characters are more accessible to a UK audience, and the action is always wisely divided between story based puzzles and fighting action.

RENDERED CHARACTERS!
Despite the simplicity of the in-game characters and backdrops, Shining Wisdom is fronted up by some pretty impressive renders.

Shining Force fans will be pleased to hear that nothing much has been changed for Climax's debut Saturn release - and when we say nothing, we mean *nothing*. You see, Shining Wisdom doesn't really expand on the Shining Force games which appeared on the Megadrive, with the graphics and the gameplay remaining almost exactly the same as its 16-bit counterparts. But, in a way that's no bad thing, as it's the unique gameplay that made these games so popular in the first place.

However, there are a few changes to be found in Shining Wisdom. For a start, it seems more than an idea or two has been borrowed form distant cousin Zelda on the Super Nintendo, which featured more arcadey type play. So, gone are the endless first person perspective battles where twenty minutes are spent slowly chipping away at a monster's hit points, replaced instead with a hack 'em up atmosphere. However, the team building exercises seen in the 16-bit titles remains, giving the title yet more depth.

With gameplay strongly influenced by Zelda, this could be the greatest Saturn adventure yet!

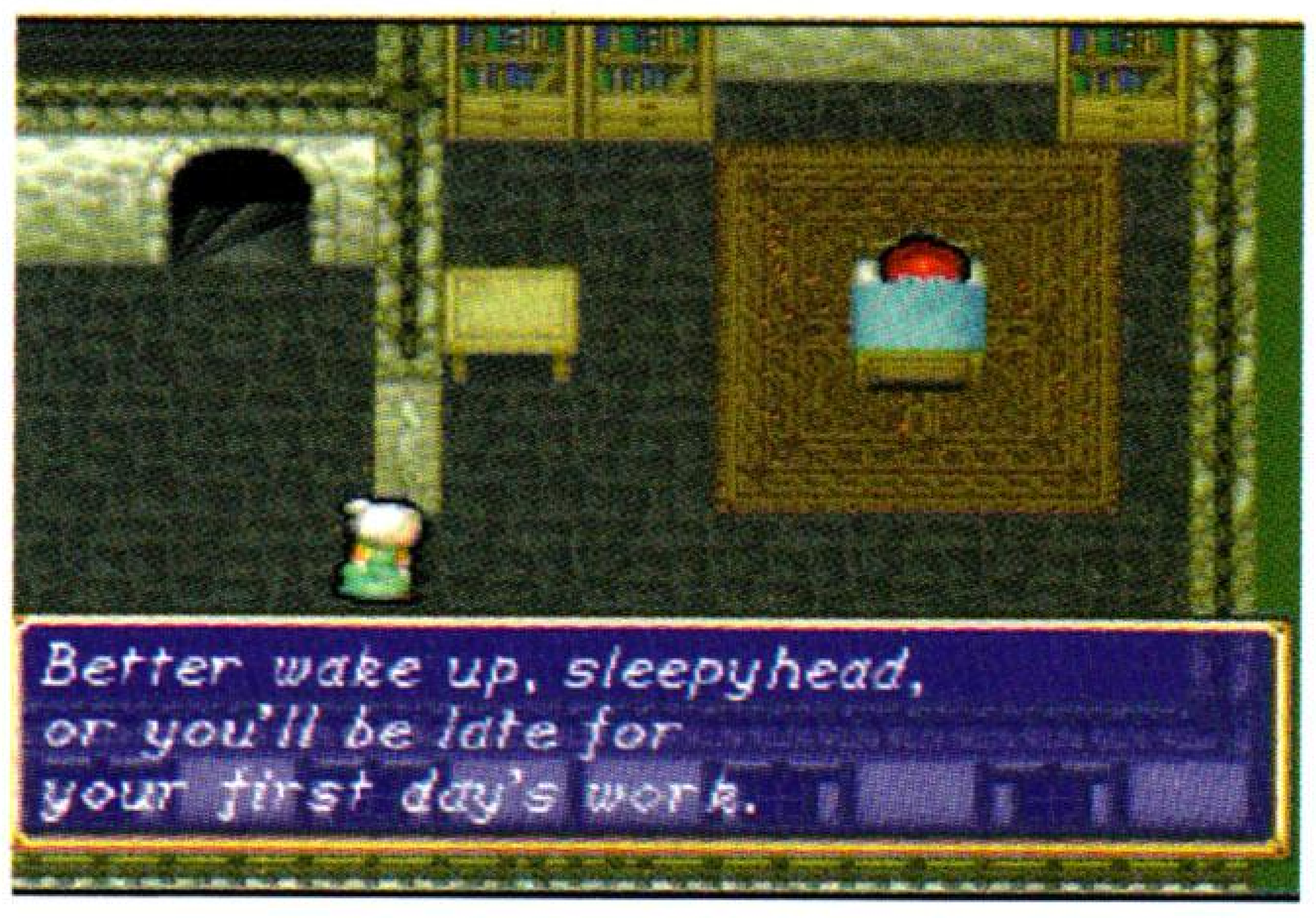


GRAPHICALLY LIMITED
Shining Force has never been known for its graphical finesse and you would have thought that Climax would have made a bit more of an effort on the Saturn. Well, apparently they haven't...

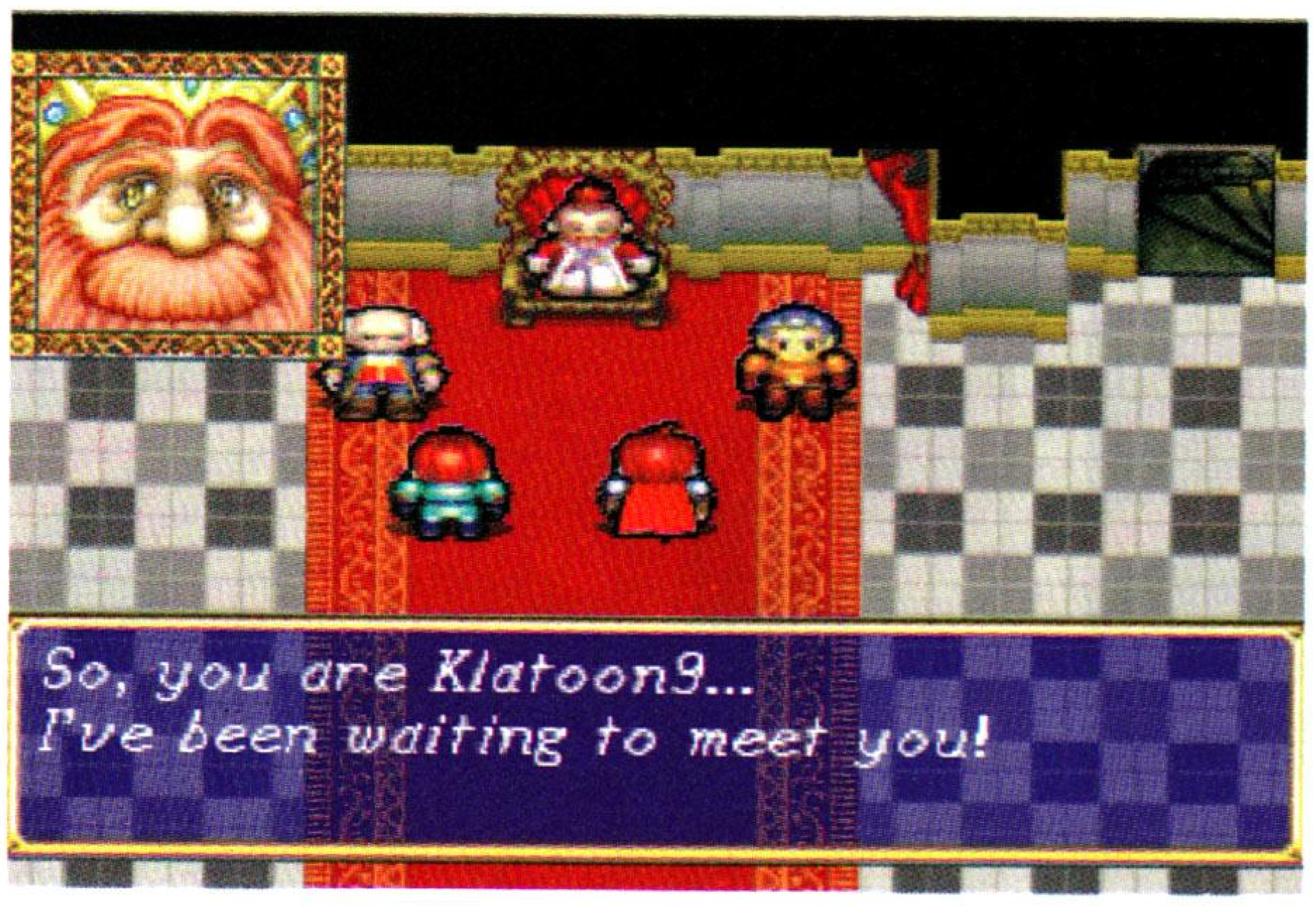
SHINING THROUGH
The Shining Force gameplay is bound to go down well in Japan.

Although very little in this title smacks of a next generation game (admittedly the graphics are very polished though), it could be possible that Climax were actually developing this for the Megadrive, but the project was switched for Saturn release halfway through development time. However, the storylines remain as deep as ever and the game itself is indeed, extremely compelling.

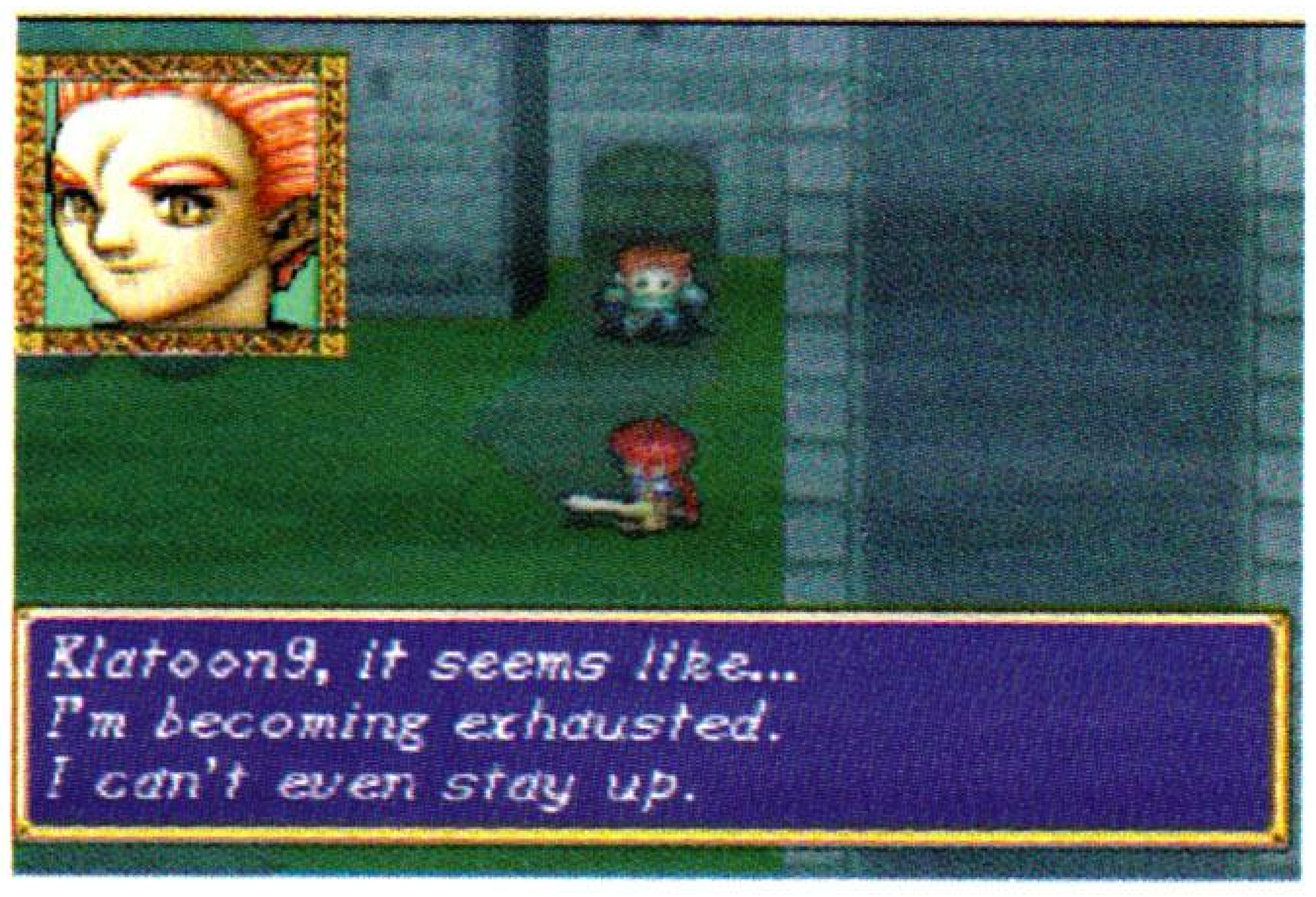
Although an English translation of the title has already appeared in the UK (at Sega's offices) it seems unlikely that they will release the title over here, as traditionally, RPGs have never been incredibly successful in this country. There's no doubt that when compared to titles such as Mystaria and Virtual Hydlide, Shining Wisdom remains vastly superior, but Sega already have plenty of other RPG titles to choose from for future release - among them Legend of Thor and the much hyped but brilliant looking Dark Savior, which should appear in summer in the UK. So, a UK release is yet to be announced. Shame really, as this employs some of the best lift music in the business...



Better wake up, sleepyhead,
or you'll be late for
your first day's work.

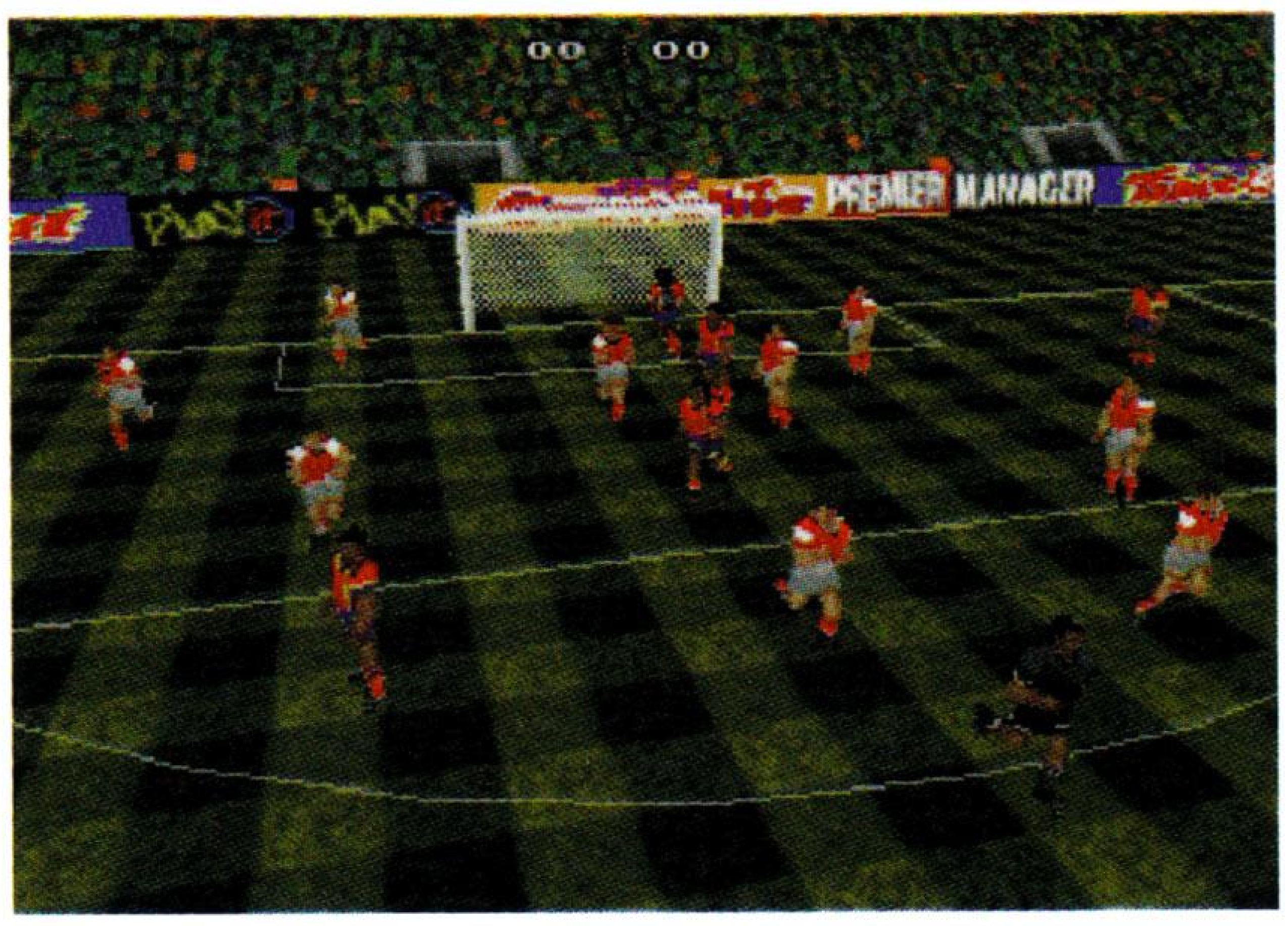


So, you are Klatoon9...
I've been waiting to meet you!



Klatoon9, it seems like...
I'm becoming exhausted.
I can't even stay up.

Sega's best FOOTIE SIMULATION to date?



SS SEGA
THE SATURN VERSION OF ACTUA!
EURO '96
AVAILABLE MAY IN **UK** PRICE **TBA**

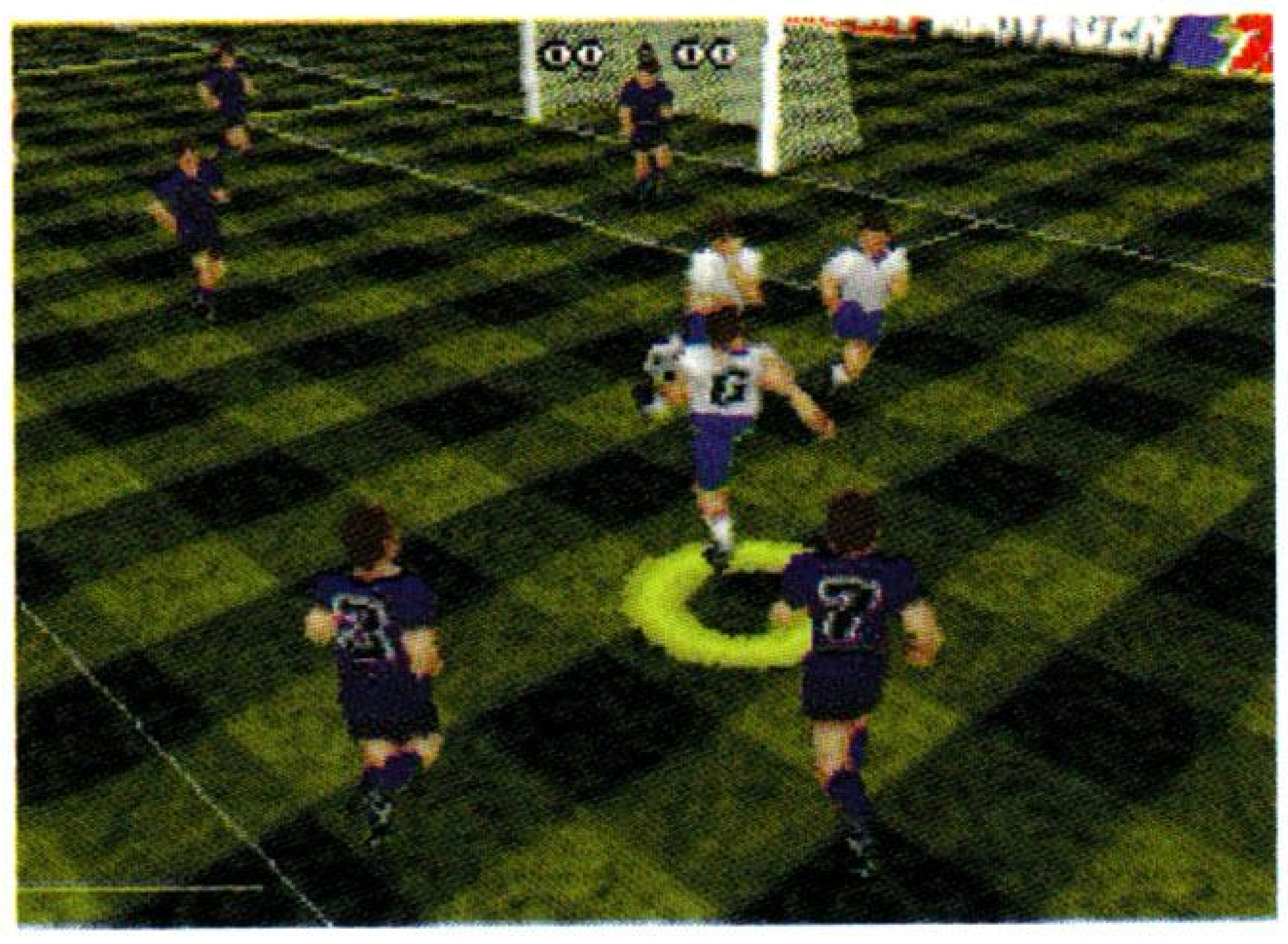
Actua Soccer, reputedly the best console footie title ever, is Saturn bound, and should be in the shops by May. This 3D style kickabout was incredibly successful on Sony's machine, and although a couple of months ago it seemed unlikely that this would appear on the Saturn, developers Gremlin have signed a special deal with Sega which sees Actua Soccer, Loaded and Actua golf appear on the Saturn.

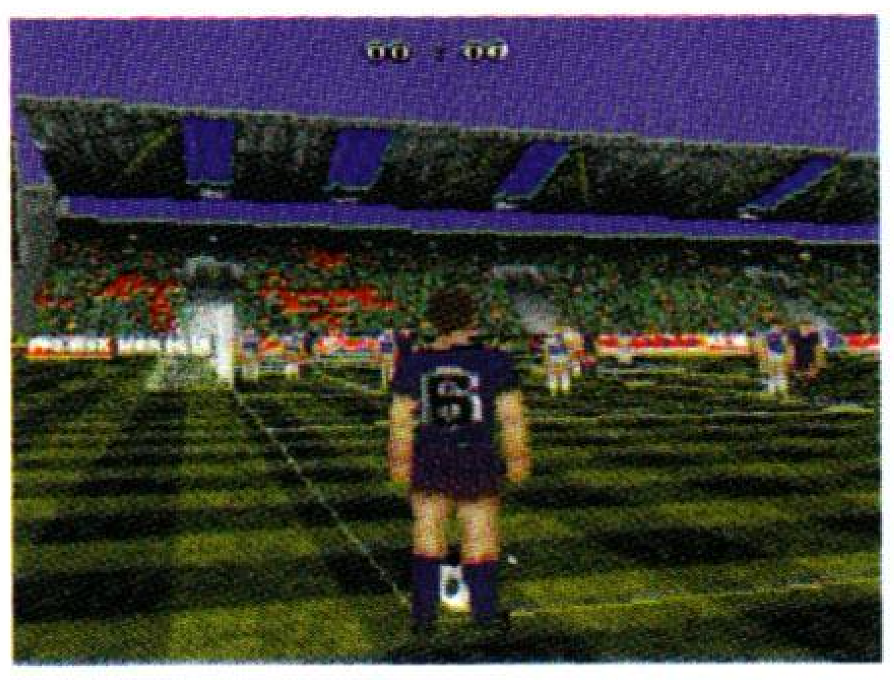
However, although Sega have taken on the conversion of the game, they're actually putting a licensed name to it - Euro '96 to be precise. Of course, this means that the game will be released to coincide with the beginning of the European Championships held in the UK in May. This obviously means that the sides have to be reprogrammed into the game, so that all the European teams will be represented. But, this isn't the only change that Sega will be making to the titles. MAXIMUM spoke to the game's chief programmer last week, and he assured us that the Saturn version would employ even better gameplay than the PlayStation game, and that there will be even more graphical changes than simply putting new strips on the players.

However, with the title only around 60% complete at the moment, it's difficult to say just how different from the PlayStation version this will be. It's certainly shaping up to be a great conversion, although at the moment the graphics and control mechanisms are largely unfinished.

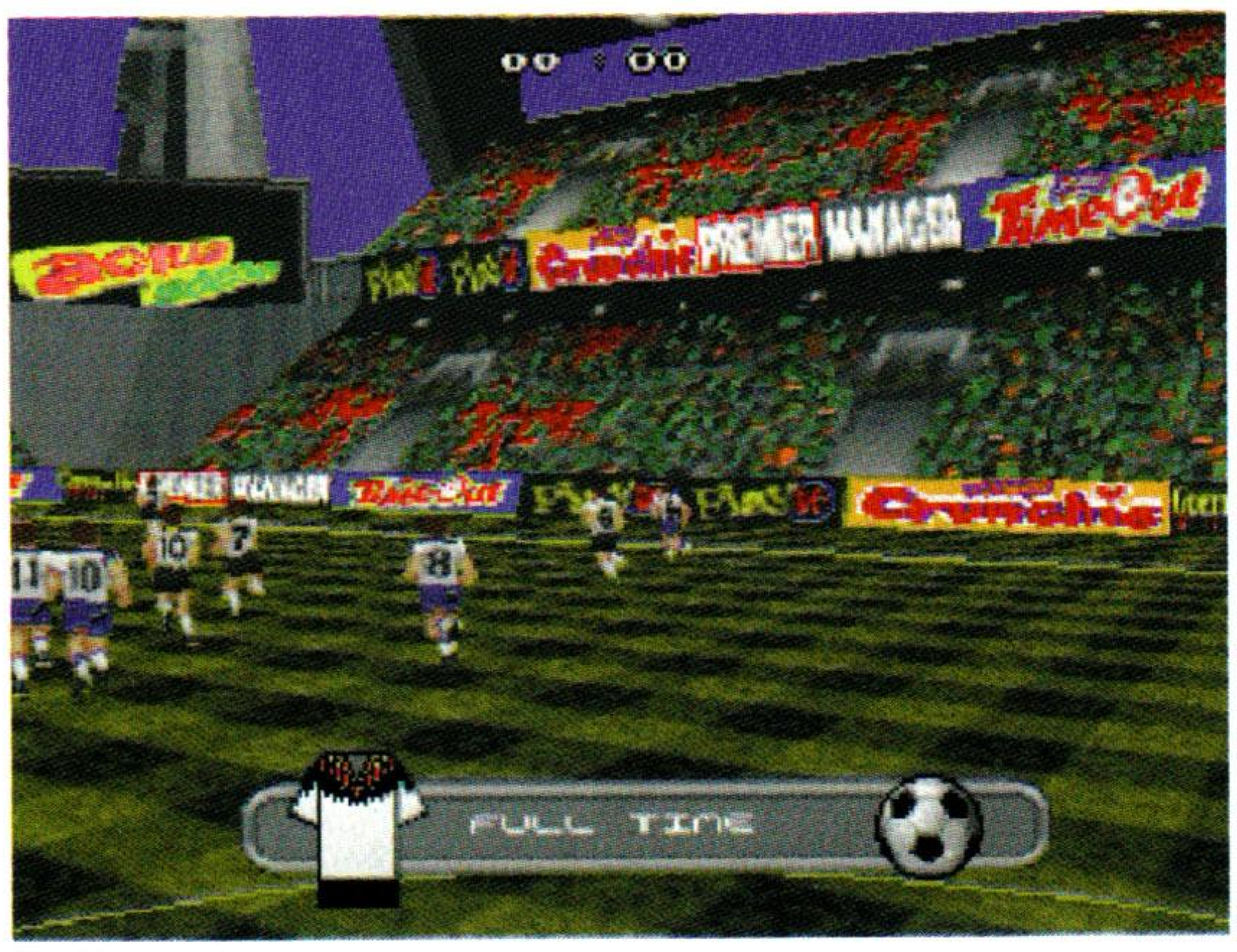
Gremlin/Sega still have a fair amount of work left to do on the Saturn conversion of Actua, and although the main mechanics of the game are largely finished, there's still plenty of tweaking work left to do on the graphics. In fact, the screenshots here utilise only 32 colours of the Saturn's palette, while the finished version will use 256, which will obviously mean a much brighter, visually sumptuous game.

when you compare even an unfinished version of Euro '96 to what's currently available on the Saturn - these being Victory Goal and FIFA Soccer, it's already looking like it will surpass the quality of both of these titles, which means that Saturn owners will finally be treated to a decent football conversion.





SATURN ACTUA SOCCER
Unlike EA's flawed FIFA effort, Gremlin have gone to great lengths to make sure that the Saturn version of Actua (Euro '96) is as fast and colourful as the PlayStation and PC originals.



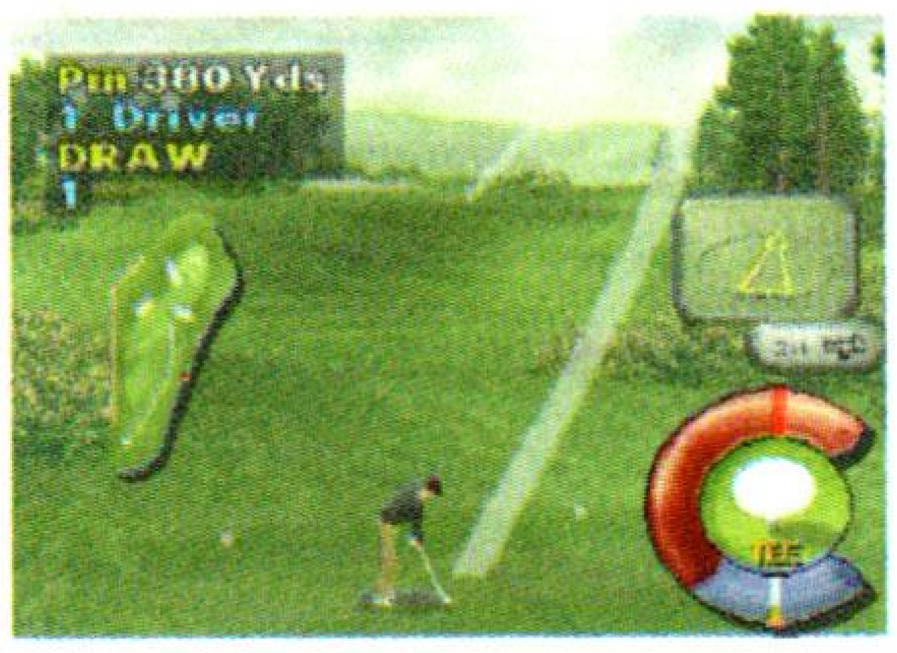
Gremlin prepare ACTUA SEQUEL

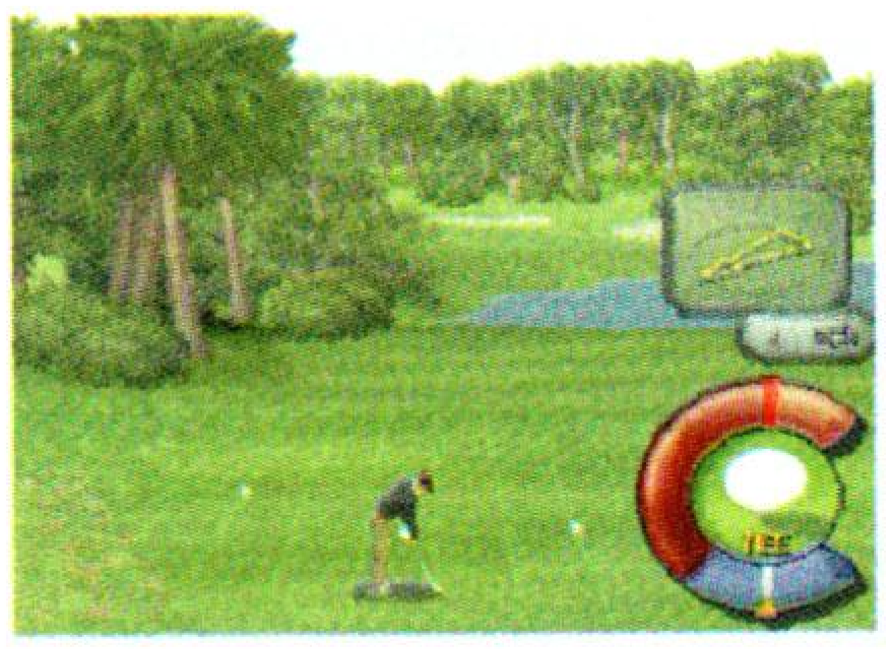
PS GREMLIN
GREMLIN ANNIHILATE THE PGA EFFORT
ACTUA GOLF
AVAILABLE SOON IN **UK**

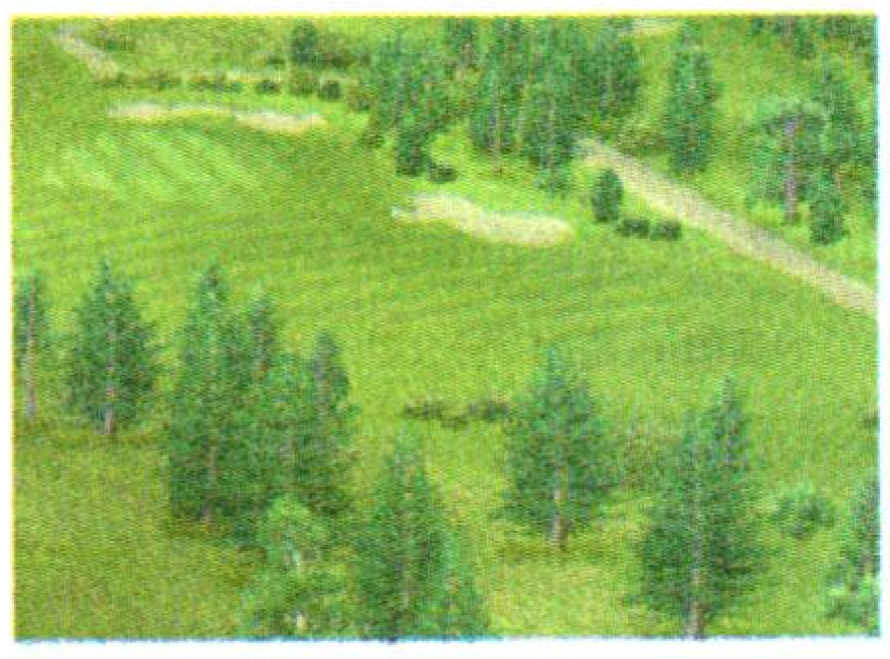
Work is finally coming to a close on Actua Golf - the top-class golfing simulation from Gremlin. There's very little we can add to our report from issue #1 apart from the fact that the coding is now just about complete and **MAXIMUM** has sat down for a morning's worth of play. The preliminary verdict? Very smart indeed, with by far the best graphics and gameplay yet seen on PlayStation in terms of golfing simulations.

All being well, the game should be complete and ready in time for review in **MAXIMUM** issue #5, so that should be something to look out for. In the meantime, here are some pictures of the latest version...

EXCELLENT 3D
Actua Golf is by far the best looking golfing simulation seen on PlayStation so far. The amount of detail on the 3D coupled with a pretty decent update results in a truly spectacular golfing simulation. Nice one, Gremlin.







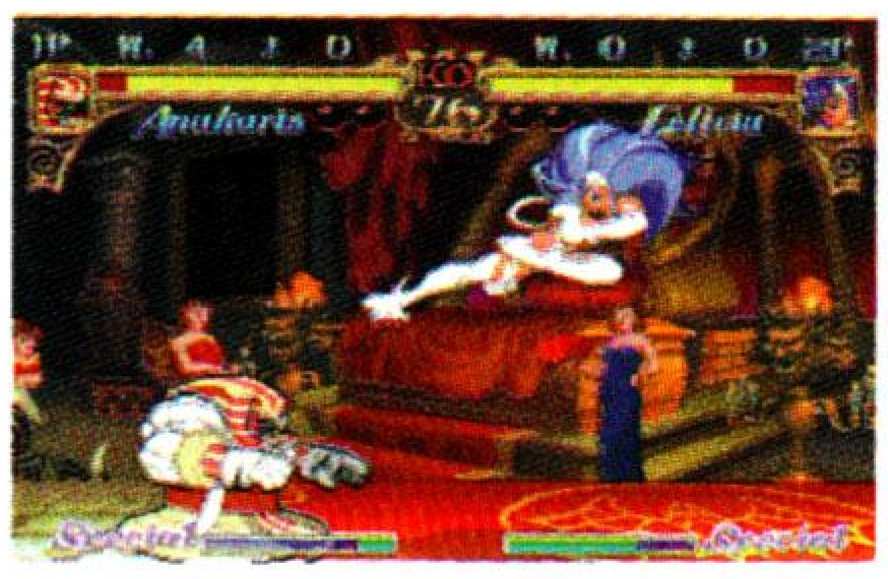
FLY-BY FACILITIES
Actua Golf features some pretty spectacular rendered fly-bys accompanied by a good commentary on the course itself.
In addition, it's also possible to take a first person perspective walkabout of each hole.

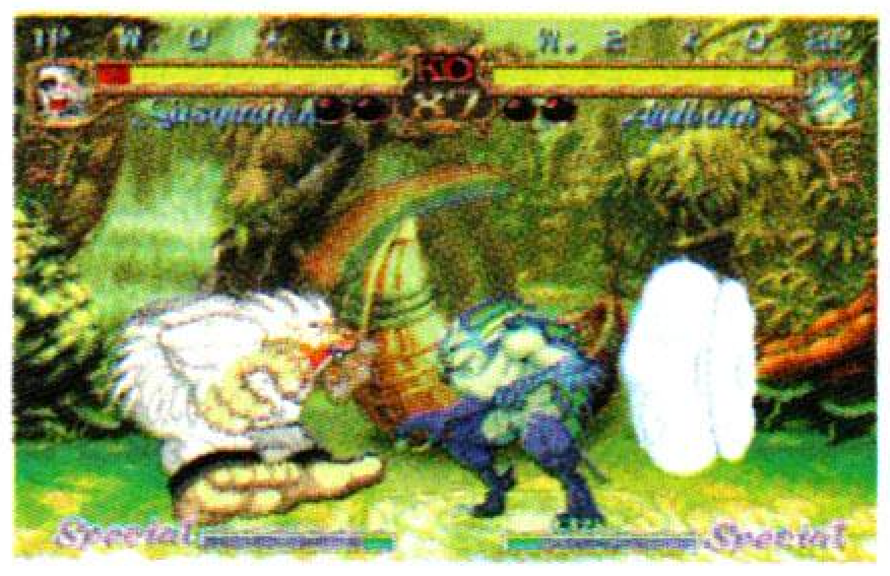
PS CAPCOM
FINALLY! IT'S ALMOST READY!
DARKSTALKERS
AVAILABLE JULY IN **UK** PRICE **UNCONFIRMED**

CAPCOM strike twice!

Stalled DARKSTALKERS nears completion

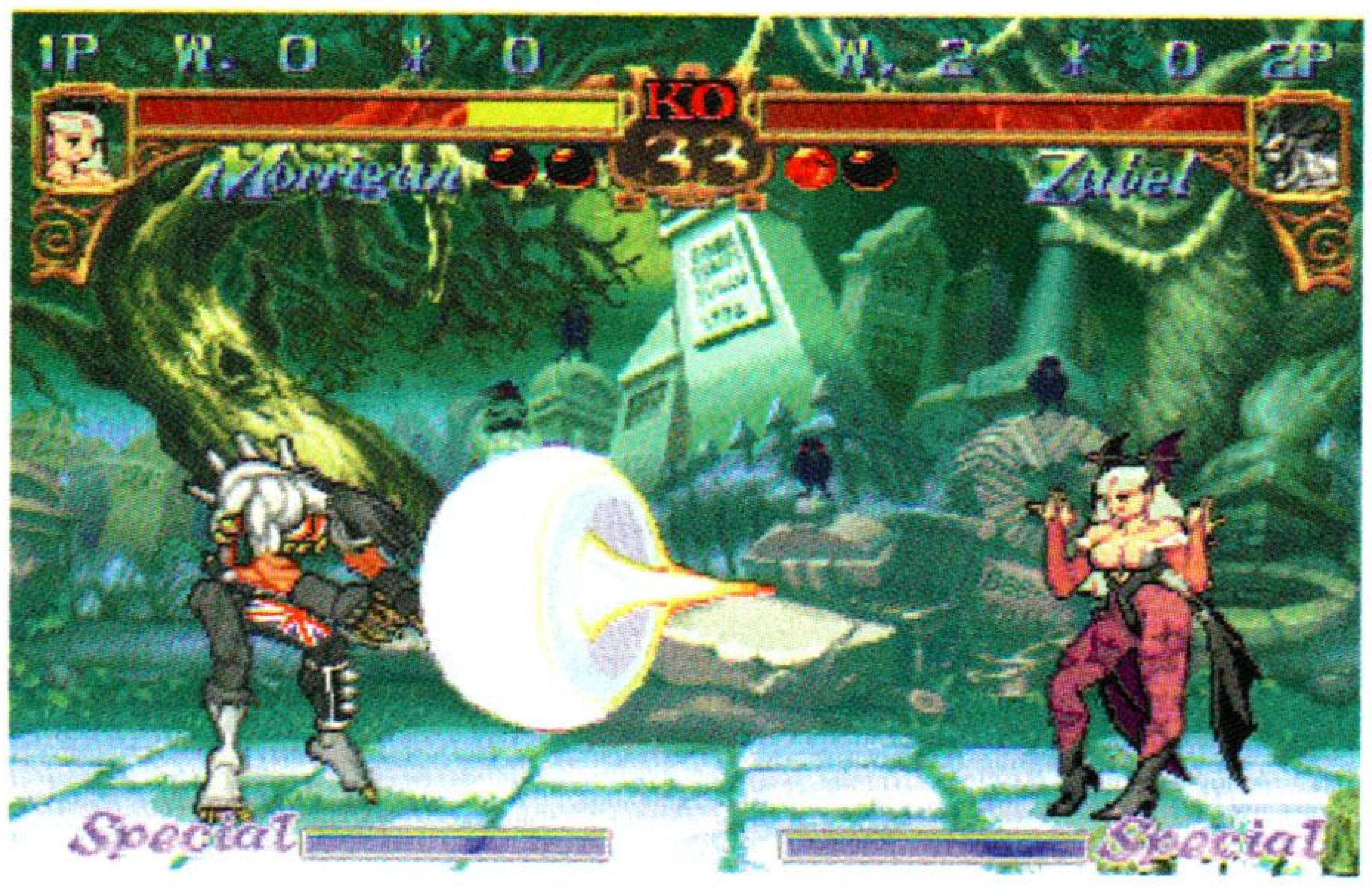
When Capcom announced its PlayStation development, the first game to be announced was Vampire - known in the US and Europe as DarkStalkers. A tentative release date of April, 1995 was set. Well, it's now February 1996 and the game is still far from completion.



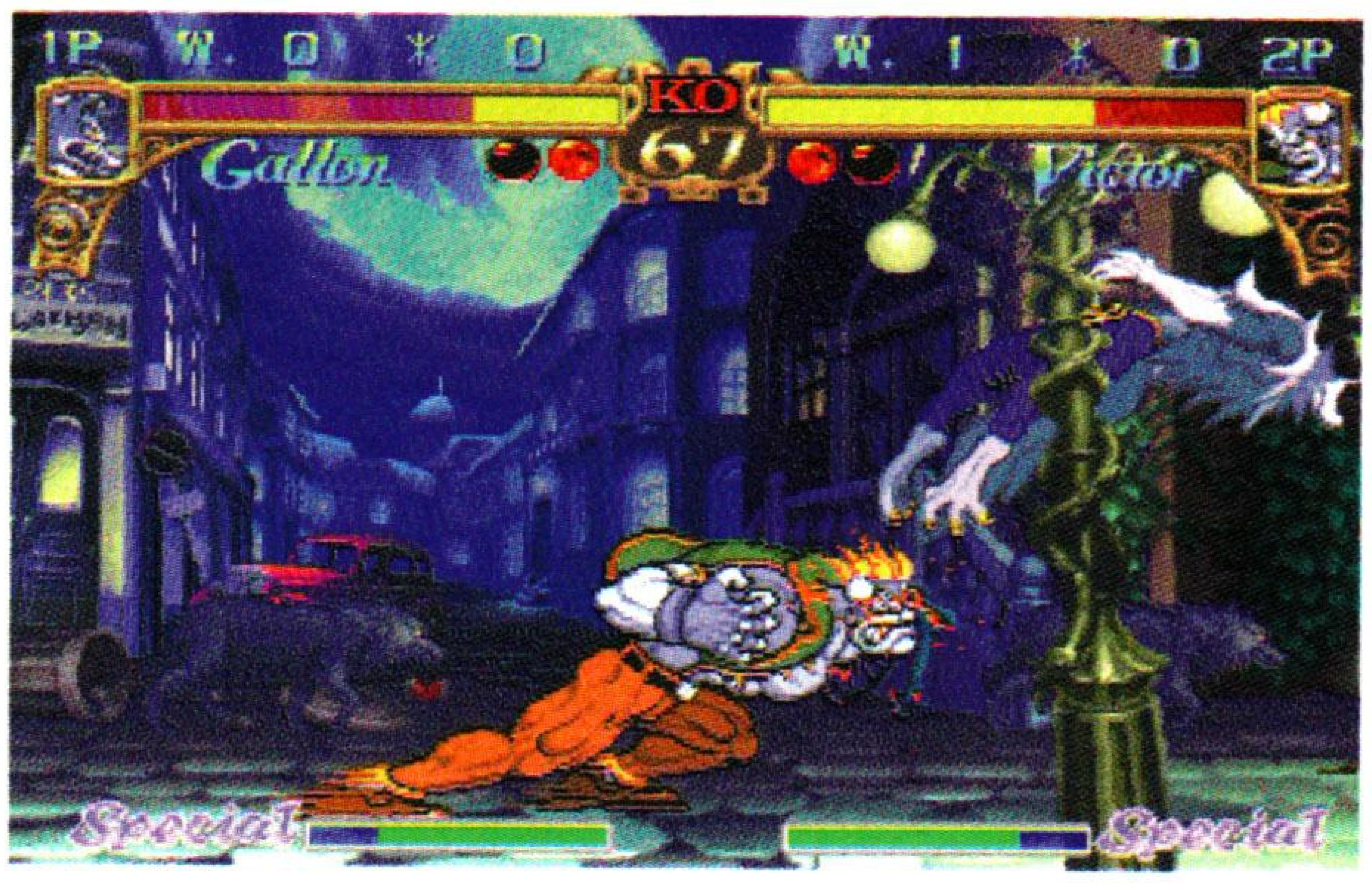


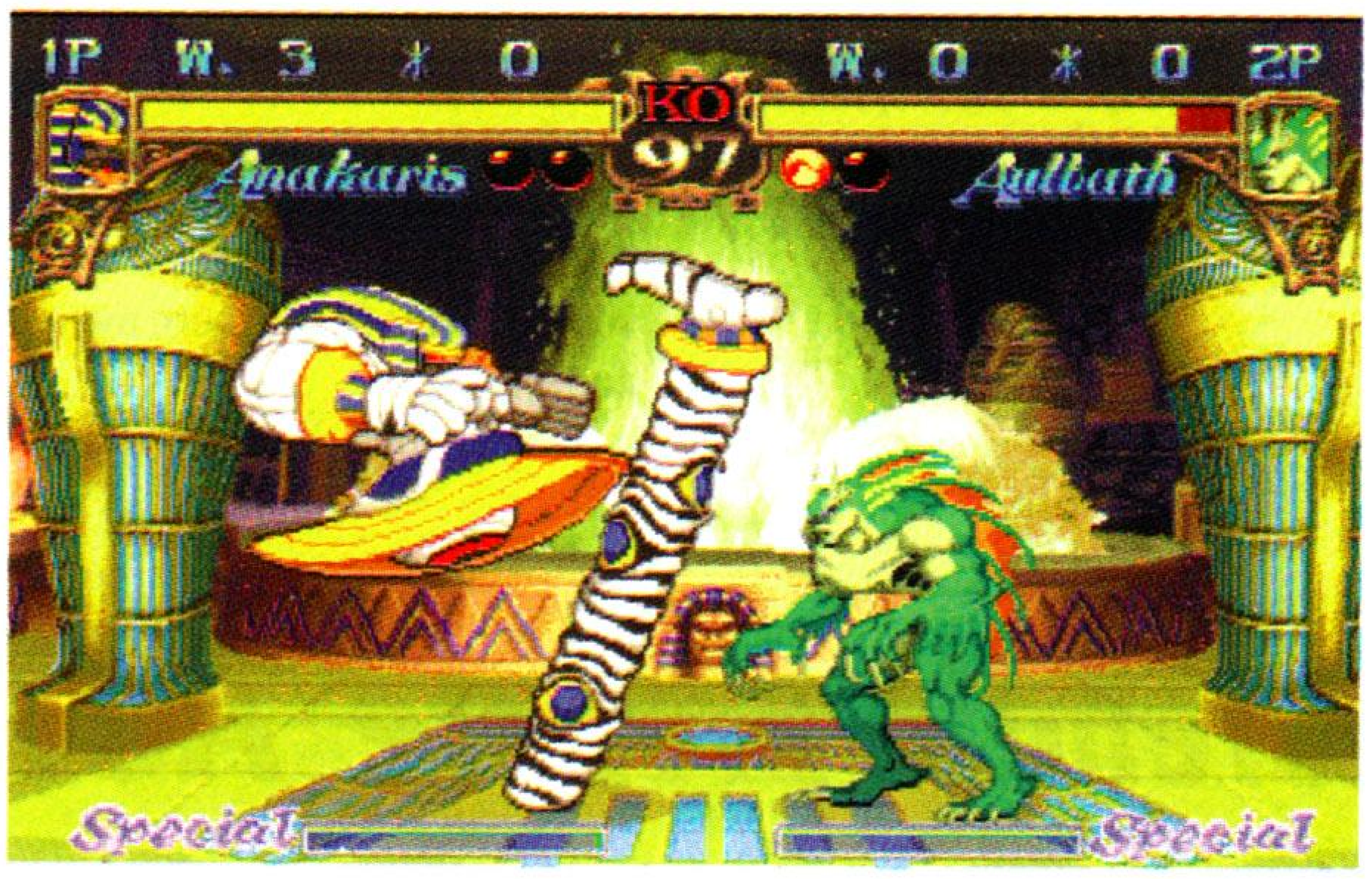
Owing to their inexperience with the Sony hardware, Capcom handed over the conversion to Psygnosis, who first revealed a basic demo at the Los Angeles E3 Show in May last year. **MAXIMUM** got a look at a more advanced four-character demo with an excellent intro when we were putting together issue #1, and although the graphics looked excellent, all of the frames of animation on the special moves were absent. At the time of writing, the game is still not complete (despite being reviewed in a down-market UK journal several months ago) with development gauged at around the 70% complete level.

Virgin Interactive, who are publishing the majority of Capcom's products, showed us the latest version of the game and **MAXIMUM** was surprised at the quality of the translation. Due to a lack of video RAM, the PlayStation is quite hard pressed to handle the huge sprites DarkStalkers possesses but it would appear that Psygnosis have (finally!) managed to sort the game out. The screenshots on these pages are all from the in-development PlayStation title, and you can be guaranteed that by the time the game is ready, it will be nigh-on arcade-perfect, so expect great things.



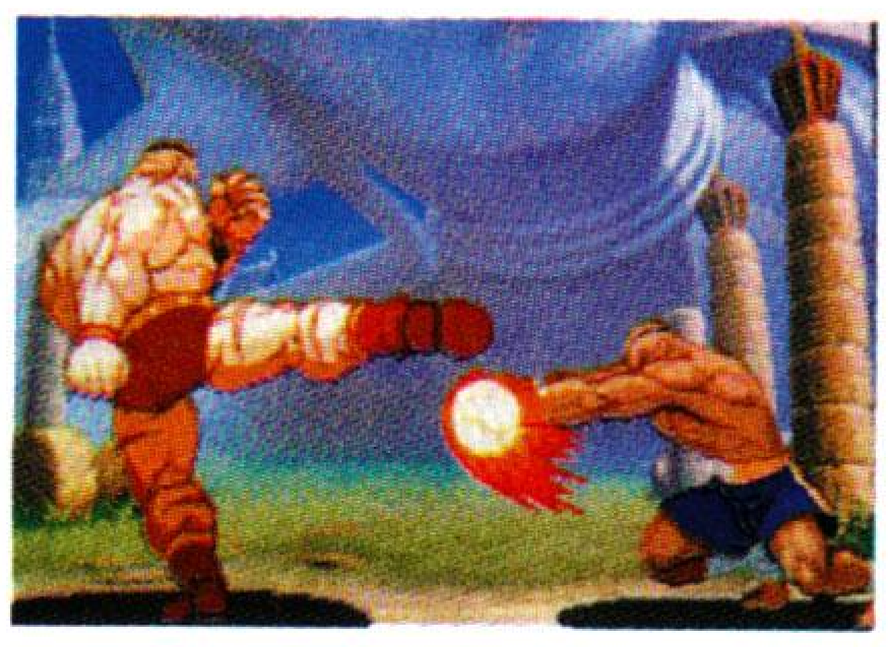
The intriguing aspect of all of this is that the Saturn is benefiting from a conversion of Vampire Hunter (the sequel), and work began on that translation several months after the PlayStation game. Whilst the Sony title still isn't finished, Capcom put the finished touches to Vampire Hunter a few weeks ago and it's available on import now...

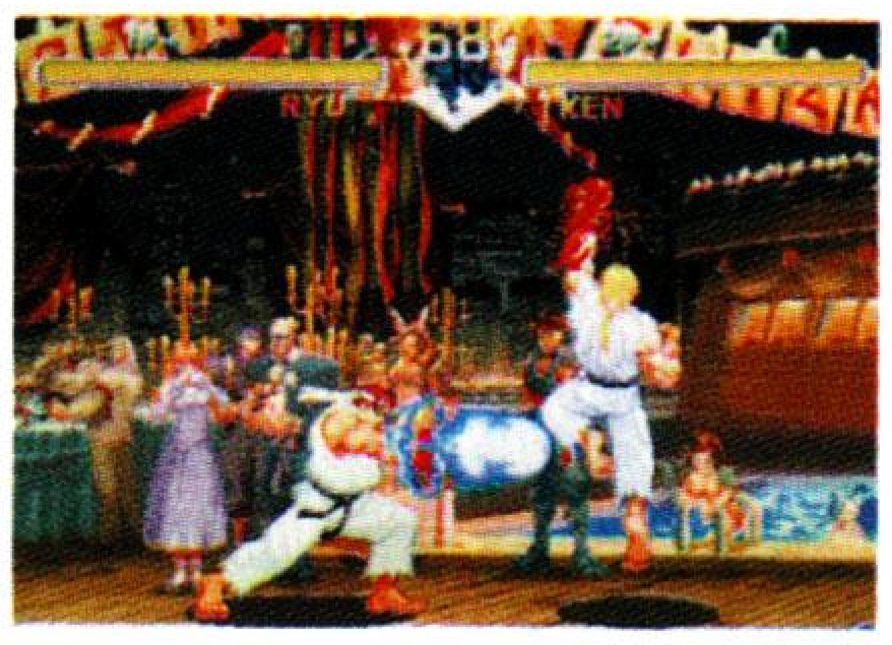


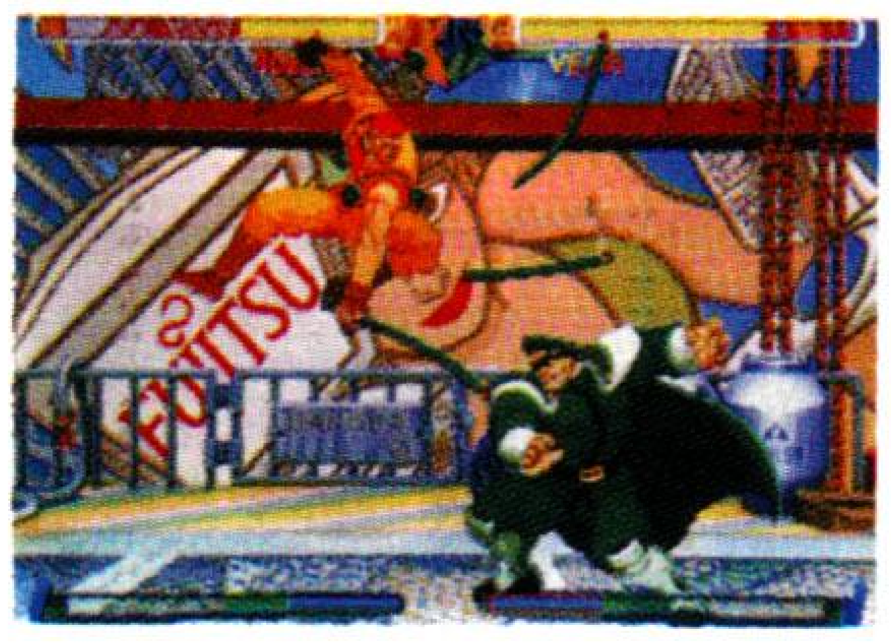


Launch of arcade

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2!







AC CAPCOM
THE NINTH ARCADE SF GAME!
STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2
AVAILABLE SOON IN **UK ARCADES**

Just as we went to press, Capcom released preliminary pictures of their next Street Fighter title. It's a sequel to Street Fighter Alpha (home conversions are featured from page 60) and looks like being another excellent outing for Ryu and company, but with several key additions to the established SF Alpha formula.

The game features all-new backdrops and several new characters, along with additions to the Super Combo system. Alpha 2 also continues plundering the Capcom history, for new characters including Zangief and Rolento. The former is well known to SF2 masters, being a huge Russian wrestler specialising in throws. Rolento is the level four boss from Final Fight. He's still hanging around elevators in Street Fighter Alpha 2 and he remains in possession of a bunch of hand-grenades!

A time bar has been added to the Super Combo system. Capcom haven't announced details of how to power the bar up (keeping buttons held down, perhaps?), but different variations of the Super Combo can be initiated depending on how full the bar is.

Characters confirmed for a return visit in Alpha 2 include Ryu, Ken, Akuma, Bison and Rose. The game is Capcom's showpiece product at the forthcoming AOU Show in Japan, so expect more details in **MAXIMUM** issue #5.

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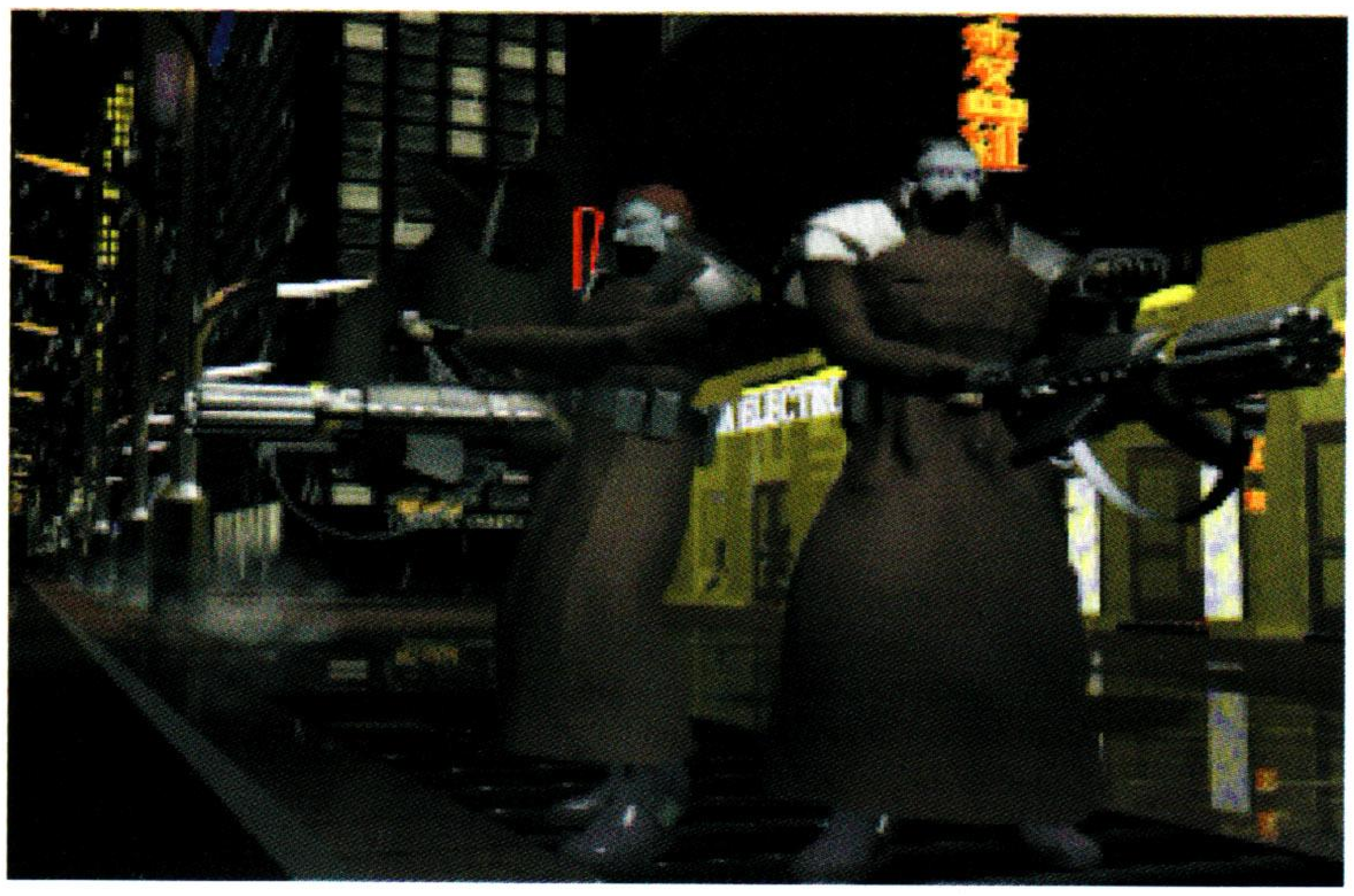
MAXIMUM NEWS

PS SCHEDULED FOR THE PC AND PLAYSTATION
SYNDICATE WARS
BULLFROG DUE FOR A **UK** RELEASE IN **MAY**, PRICE UNCONFIRMED

HOME OF THE BODY BAG

SYNDICATE WARS



A hundred years have passed since the sinister Corporation achieved global domination of the world by obliterating all competitors, nation by nation, and then controlling the newly acquired population with a technologically advanced mind control device known as the 'CHIP'.

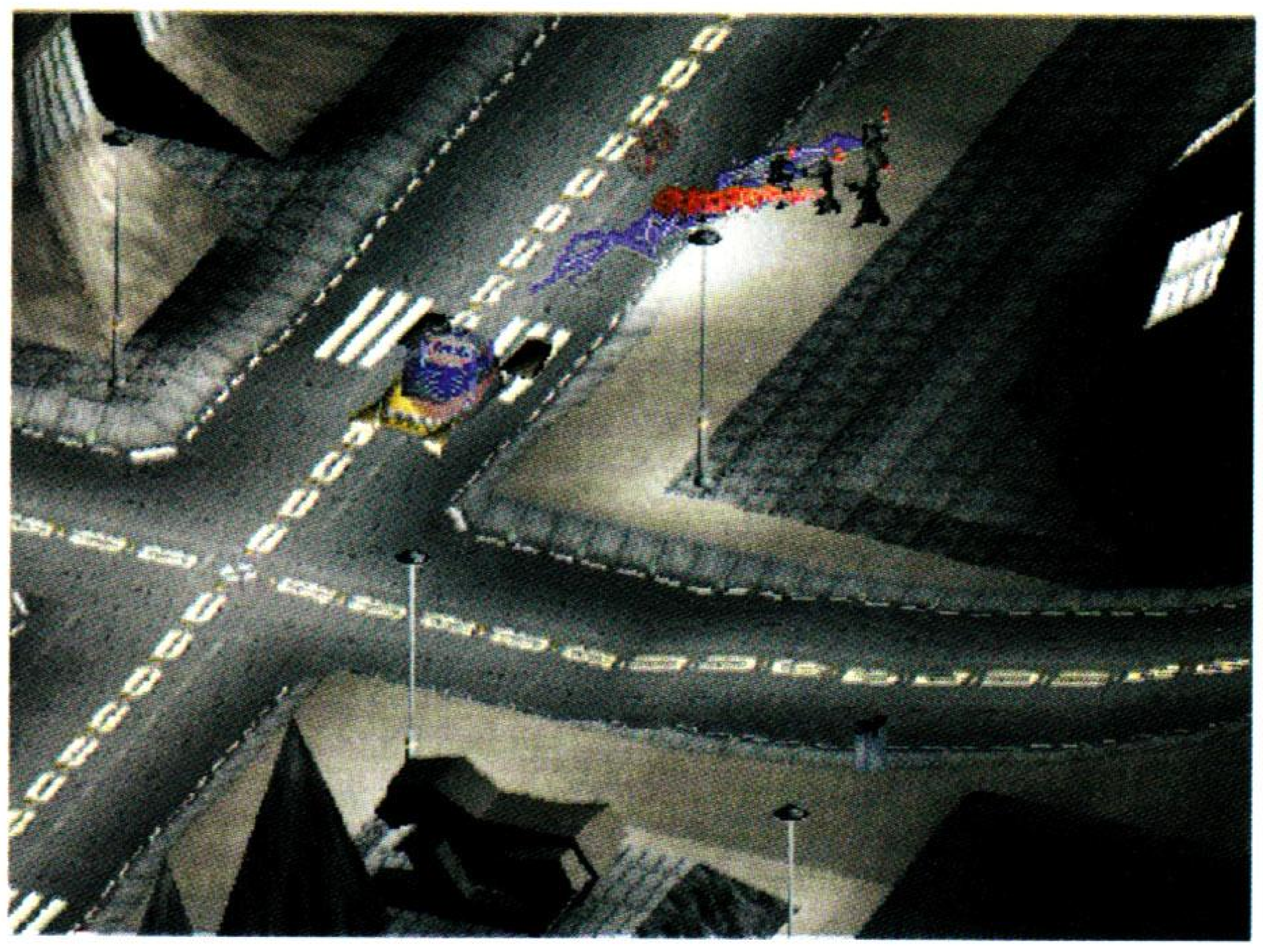
At massive cost, the CHIP was grafted directly onto the central nervous system of every single indigenous citizen, directly altering their perception of reality to correspond with the needs of The Corporation. Once the chip is in place, the pacified recipient is rendered ignorant of the grim reality of everyday life, and is purified of any rebellious thoughts (democracy, freedom, ambition) that he or she might harbour. Those citizens who objected to this somewhat radical population control solution where either 'persuaded' otherwise by Syndicate agents, or else deemed unsuitable for such a utopian existence and duly executed. After a century of unchallenged authority, the Corporation has grown complacent and encounters a growing number of challenging problems. The chip has started to malfunction and once again the citizens of the world are perceiving reality as it really is - bleak and hostile. Two major forces have risen out of this chaos; a religious cult converting huge numbers of devotees to their cause and a chain of marauding biker gangs. Both factions are capitalising on the disorganisation of the Corporation in order to recruit new members, and in some cases gaining control of whole city precincts.The scene is set for an explosive showdown between these three major powers, and this time the decision rests on you to determine the outcome.

In **MAXIMUM**'s opinion, the original Syndicate was an absolutely classic blastathon, blending a superlative main course of arcade action with a light side order of strategy. Syndicate was a landmark title on the PC, reaffirming Bullfrog's position as the premiere developer of innovative software for the PC (though the subsequent 16 bit console adaptations left something to be desired). Now, with the advent of affordable 32-bit technology, Bullfrog have decided to respond to consumer demand and produce a sequel to the ever popular Syndicate, designed to take full advantage of the new hardware platforms.

Take to the streets armed with the latest hi-calibre weaponry! Gun down innocent civilians in a hail of gunfire!

SYNDICATE STORIES

Syndicate Wars enables the player to arm a team of crack combat killers with a huge array of devastating ordinance. Favourite weapons from the original Syndicate (the Uzi, Mini gun, Flamer, Mini Rocket, Laser) and add on data disk (air strike, clone shield) return, along with an entirely new compliment of both human and alien weaponry. A handheld laser for close range tazer to flesh interface can now be found alongside the likes of energy shields and napalm mines (burning chemical fun ahoy!). Also watch out for the deadly razor wire. Simply place the aforementioned wire across a darkened alleyway and then watch in glee as an ignorant oncoming biker punk drives down the alley doing 60 mph and is gruesomely sliced in twain right before your very eyes. Other humane tools of destruction include the IFF automated tripod mounted gun turret (first seen in Aliens: Special Edition), the decidedly strange soul gun (used for draining life and adding to your own) and the awesome quantum devastator (wide beams of searing plasma death!). It is indeed, time to lock and load, gentlemen.



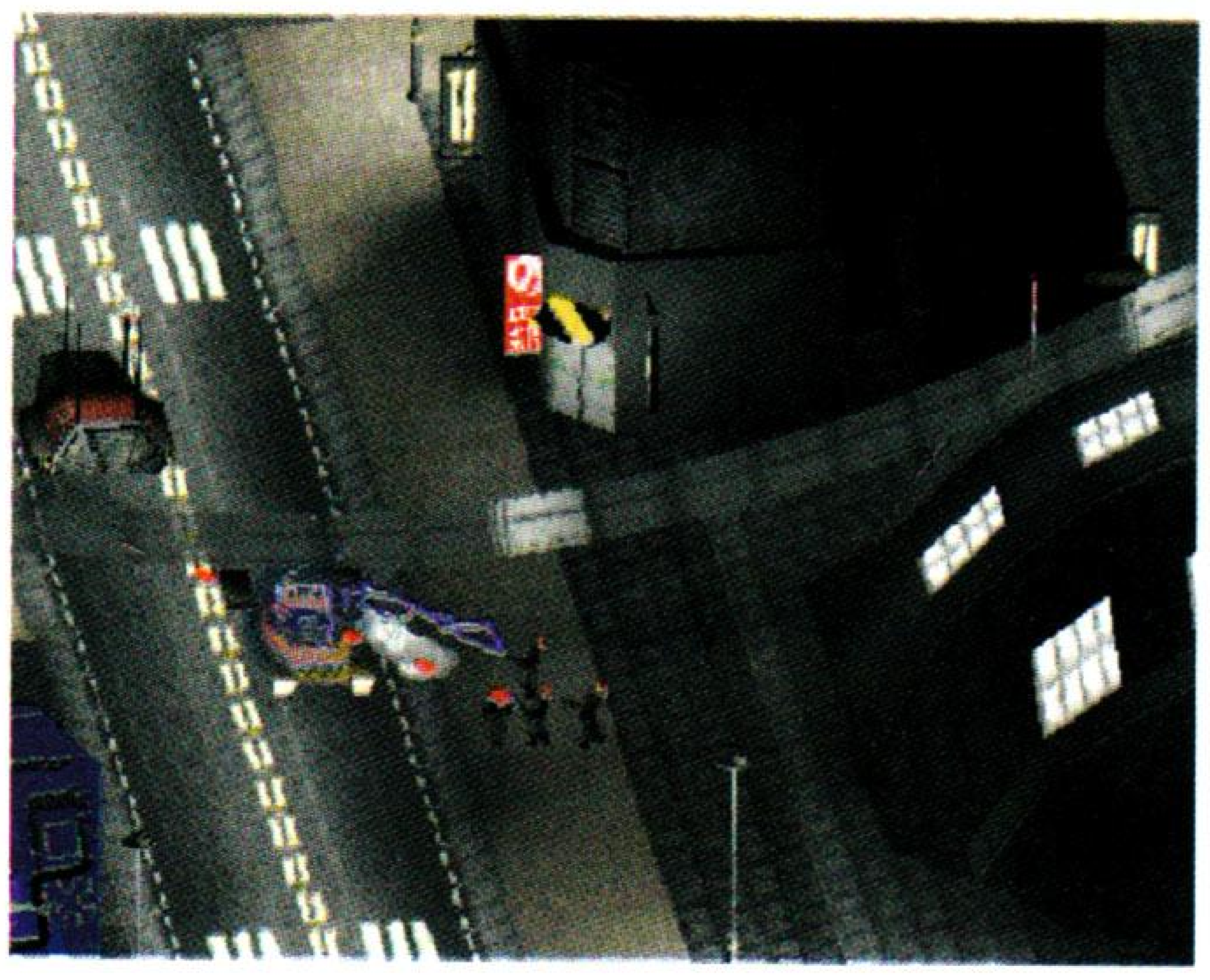
Fans of the original Syndicate will be glad to know that the basic structure of the game remains unchanged. The action still revolves around arming and deploying your group of 'agents' into an isometric city to fulfil a set of mission requirements, but Bullfrog have taken the opportunity to develop this concept to logical extremes.

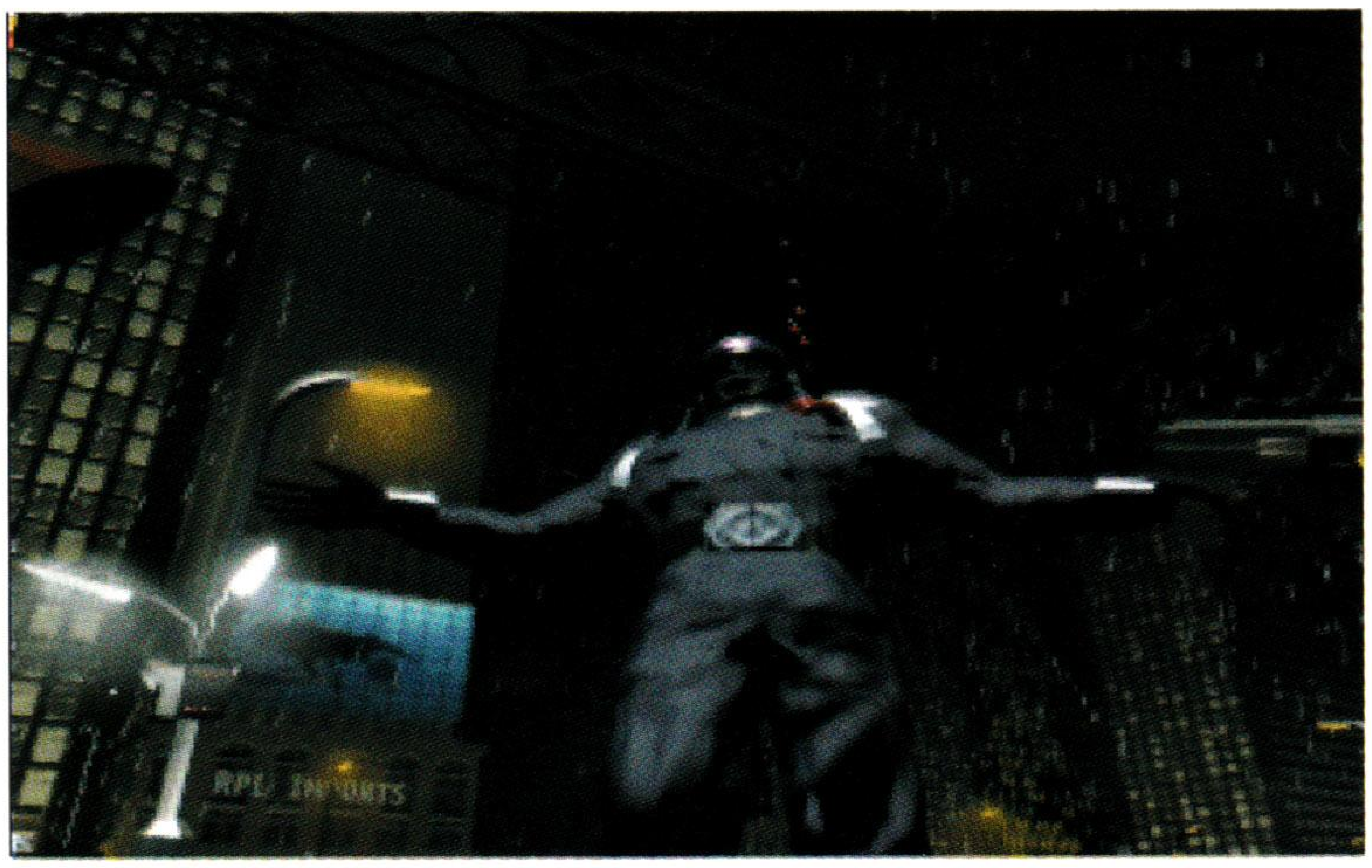
This leads to the Syndicate Wars player choosing to join one of the three different main powers; playing as either a Syndicate executive, a Church Elder, or the leader of an up and coming biker gang. This option adds to the game's longevity, as the player needs to adopt different tactics for each of the three powers for a chance of ultimate success.

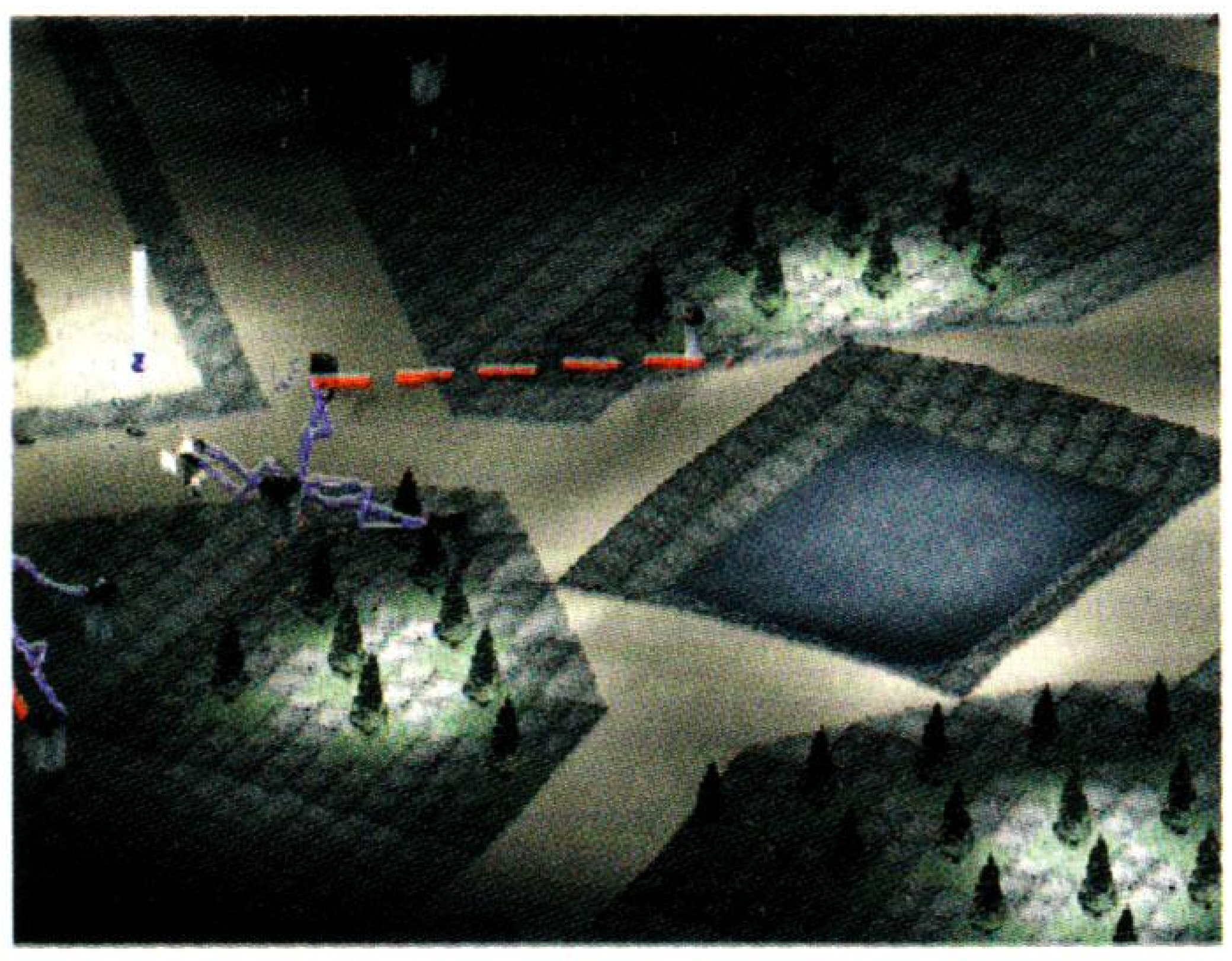
As a Syndicate corporate exec, your mission is to place the Corporation back in control and further your own career. At the start of the first mission, there appears to be nothing pressing, except have some agents do some menial work in London. However, during this mission the Church release the Harbinger virus across the globe, disabling many citizen CHIPs, and causing more people to drop out of Syndicate control and become unguided anarchist punks or Cultists. Alternatively, because the Syndicate's command and control system has been so effectively undermined, regional arms of Eurocorp suddenly splinter into rogue faction syndicates, which you must fight as well. Your final objective brings you into conflict with the mysterious religious governing body, the Nine, and ultimately leads to an explosive confrontation on the surface of the moon!

For players electing to join the ranks of the Church, the objectives change accordingly. When the Corporation discovers artifacts left in Reykjavik by other world life forms,

HOSE 'EM DOWN!
A rather foolhardy Syndicate squad member decides to employ a novel approach to taxi hailing (below).





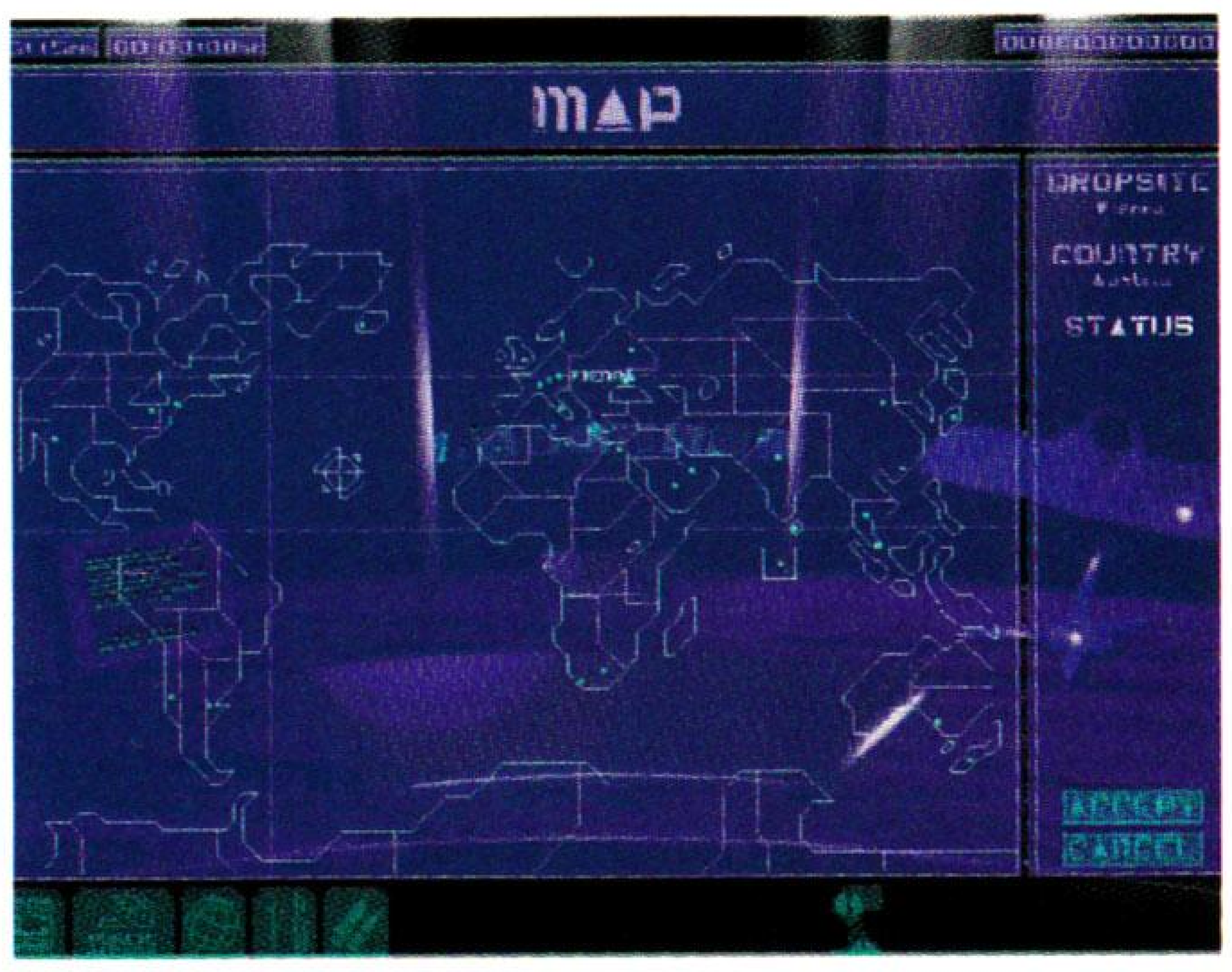


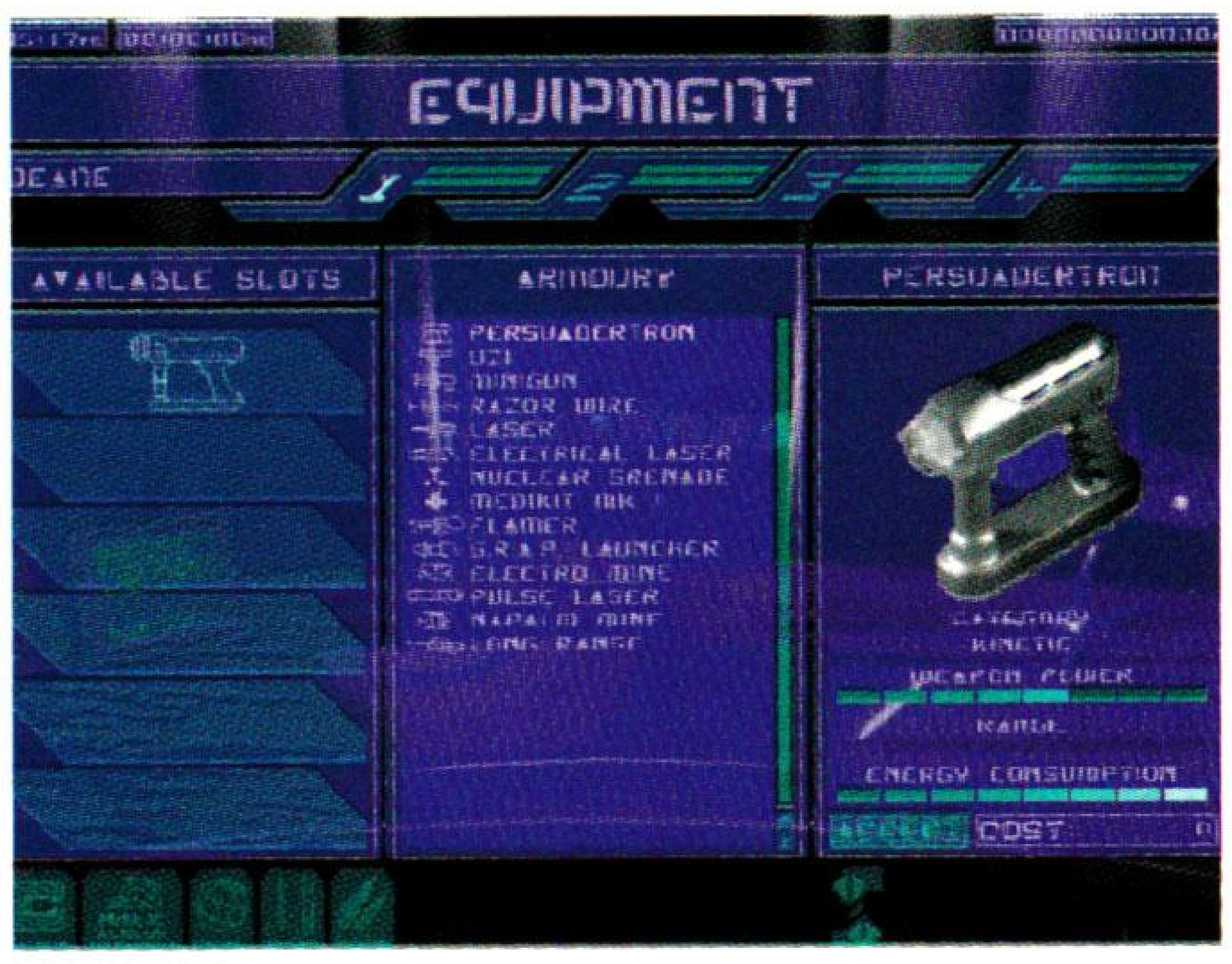
an Other world Research Group (ORG) is formed to investigate. While experimenting with the alien technology, the ORG discover enlightenment (!), and splinter off from the Syndicate to continue their research underground, setting up the Church of the New Epoch based on 'the Codex' - a set of encoded data containing information on amazing alien technology which can be adapted for military use. As a church elder you answer directly to the ORG, now known as the Nine, and aid them in their struggle to overthrow the Syndicates, fill the world with their religion and do away with the CHIP culture for good. As the game progresses however, you discover some startling revelations concerning the true intentions of the ORG which test your loyalty to the limit!

The final selectable power, the Unguided, only becomes available after the player has completed the game as either the Church or the Syndicate. As these neo-punk biker gangs have no high tech research options, their current scenarios are based on weight of numbers, conquest and capture. The Unguided's objectives are not clear at the moment, though they receive their orders from Ko-paull Vissick, an ex-member of the ORG who seems to be the only person on Earth who really understands the monumental problems that everyone faces.

The missions themselves, based around 30 individual cities, are likely to be a little more complex than in the original Syndicate, and may involve travelling to two or three different locations before completion. In addition, failure to complete part of the mission can result in the mission goals changing . For example, if a prisoner whom you are transporting escapes, your objective may change from 'escort' to 'terminate', changing your team from chaperones into a hunting party!

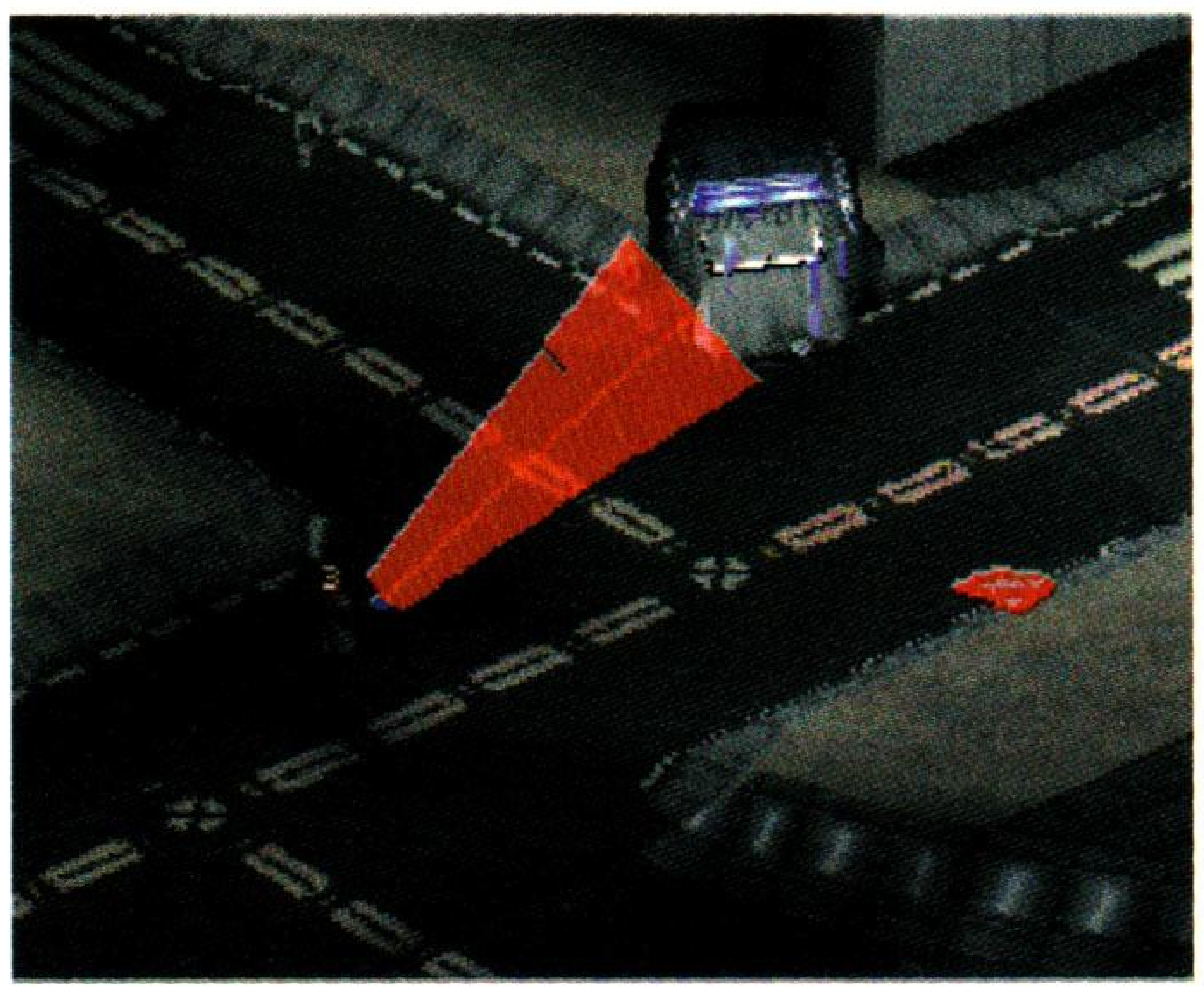
STAFF FORCED TO WORK
Innocent employees have been pressganged into incredibly insociable hours. The publishing houses of the future are a terrible place with poorly paid civilians slaving into the early hours of the morning.

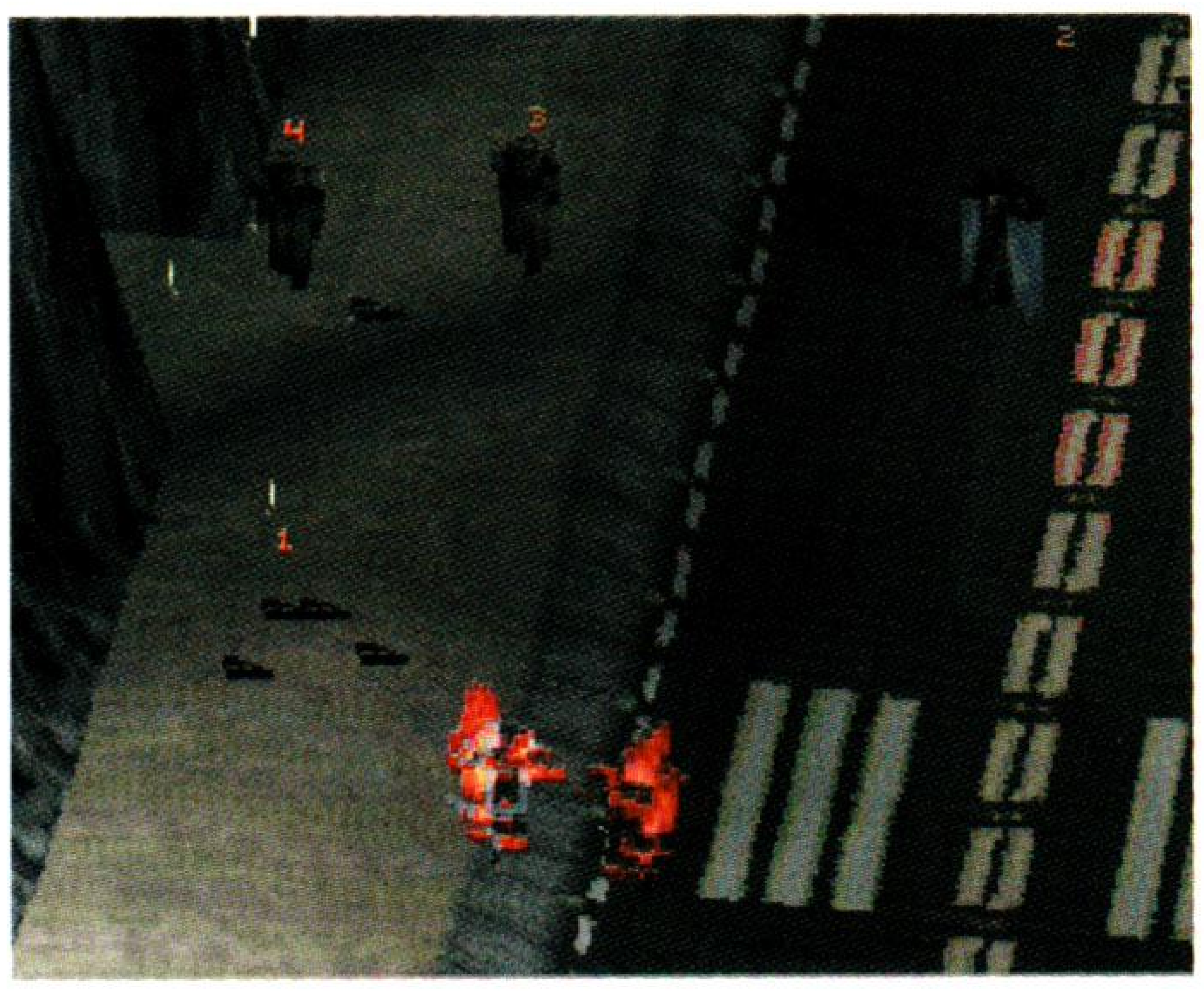




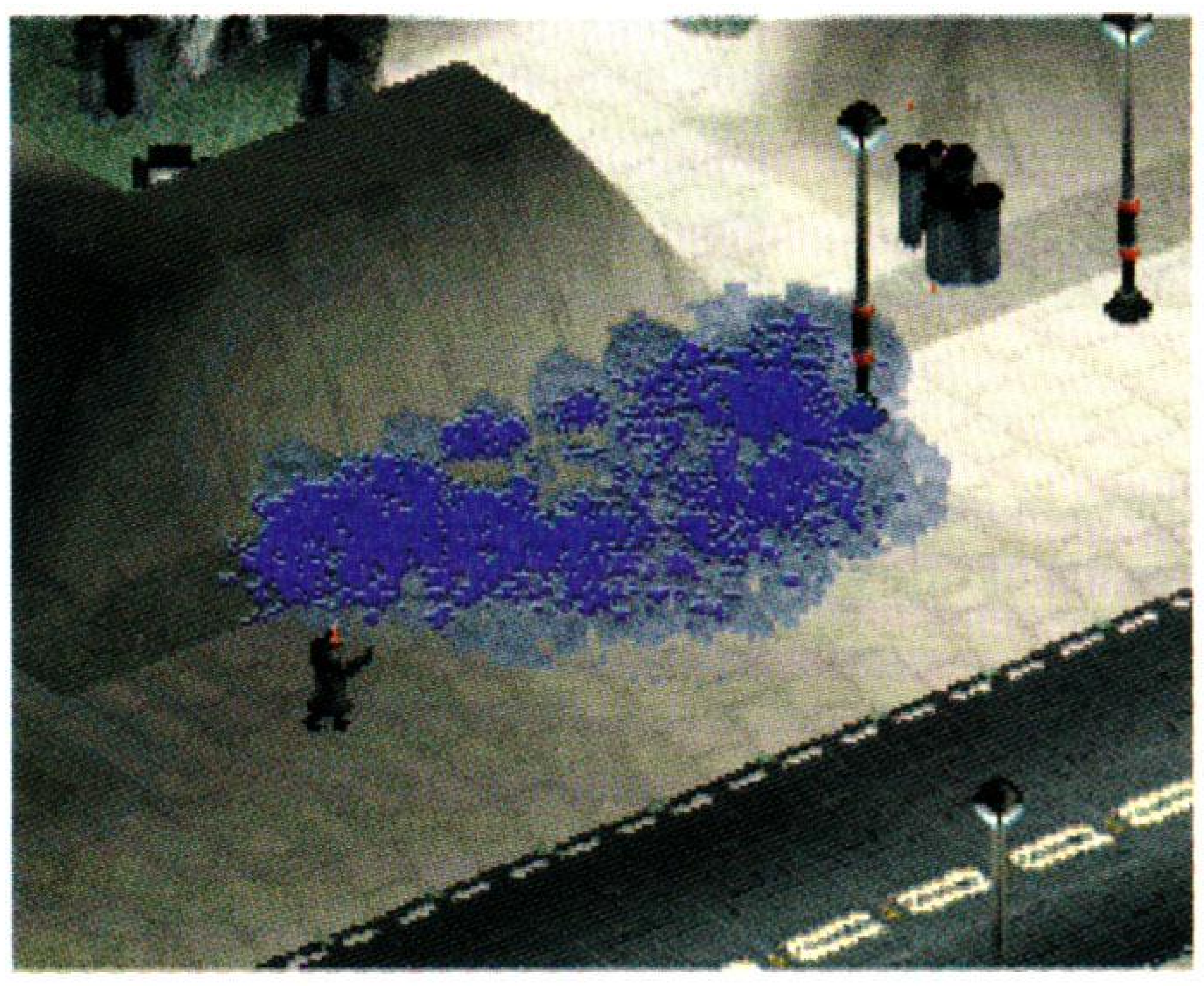
Let the strategic urban warfare commence! Hunt down the syndicate scum and slaughter 'em!

Thanks to the power of the 32-bit machines, the landscape is now a graphical feast, with the player being able to rotate the game 'camera' through 360 degrees to view the action from any angle. This overcomes the 'blind spots' syndrome of the original, meaning no more cheap ambushes by enemy agents or fiddling to find dropped weapons behind an obtrusive building. Always pioneers in the visual field, Bullfrog have also added complicated real time light algorythmns for realistic light sourcing, as well as other impressive effects such as mirrors and graphical displays that allow video streaming to the play the CD footage of your choice on the sides of in game buildings! Bullfrog have also promised us a fully interactive environment , which basically translates into the ability to destroy absolutely everything in the game; building and people alike! Indeed, they have stated that a player is able to "enter a fully living working city and leave it as a smouldering crater". This is provided you have enough high-powered weaponry.





STUNNING SVGA!
Apart from the rather fine-looking introduction (top), Syndicate features wonderfully detailed levels.



The original Syndicate offered a diverse range of weapons, each with a specific tactical property. Syndicate Wars offers a total of 24 weapons (see side text) which include both old favourites and new additions. The basic difference here is that all of the weapons in your arsenal share a communal source of energy. Rather than bothering with individual ammo for each weapon, your agents have a collective supply which depletes at differing rates depending on which weapon you are using. This energy can be refuelled at various energy consoles dotted around the city.

As we have already mentioned, the previous console conversions of Syndicate seemed to have lost something in the translation, with only the Jaguar version remaining truly faithful to the original. However even on Atari's machine, the lack of mouse control hindered the speed of the game. Hopefully, this won't be the case with Syndicate Wars. And while on the subject of conversions, one interesting feature of the otherwise dire Super NES translation was the unique two player option, which allowed multiple players to either fight cooperatively as individual agents, or battle against one another. Whether a similar option is included in Syndicate Wars, or even the possibility of a head to head link up mode, is unknown at present.

The bottom line is that Syndicate Wars is shaping up to be another polished, innovative and playable game from the masters of the action/strategy genre, Bullfrog, and **MAXIMUM** has pledged to keep you informed of further developments.

NEW WORLD ORDER
The streets have become the new place for conflict. Choose your side and fight to survive.

MAXIMUM NEWS

AC SEGA

THE BEST SEGA COIN-OPS TO DATE?
ALL-NEW AM ARCADE GAMES
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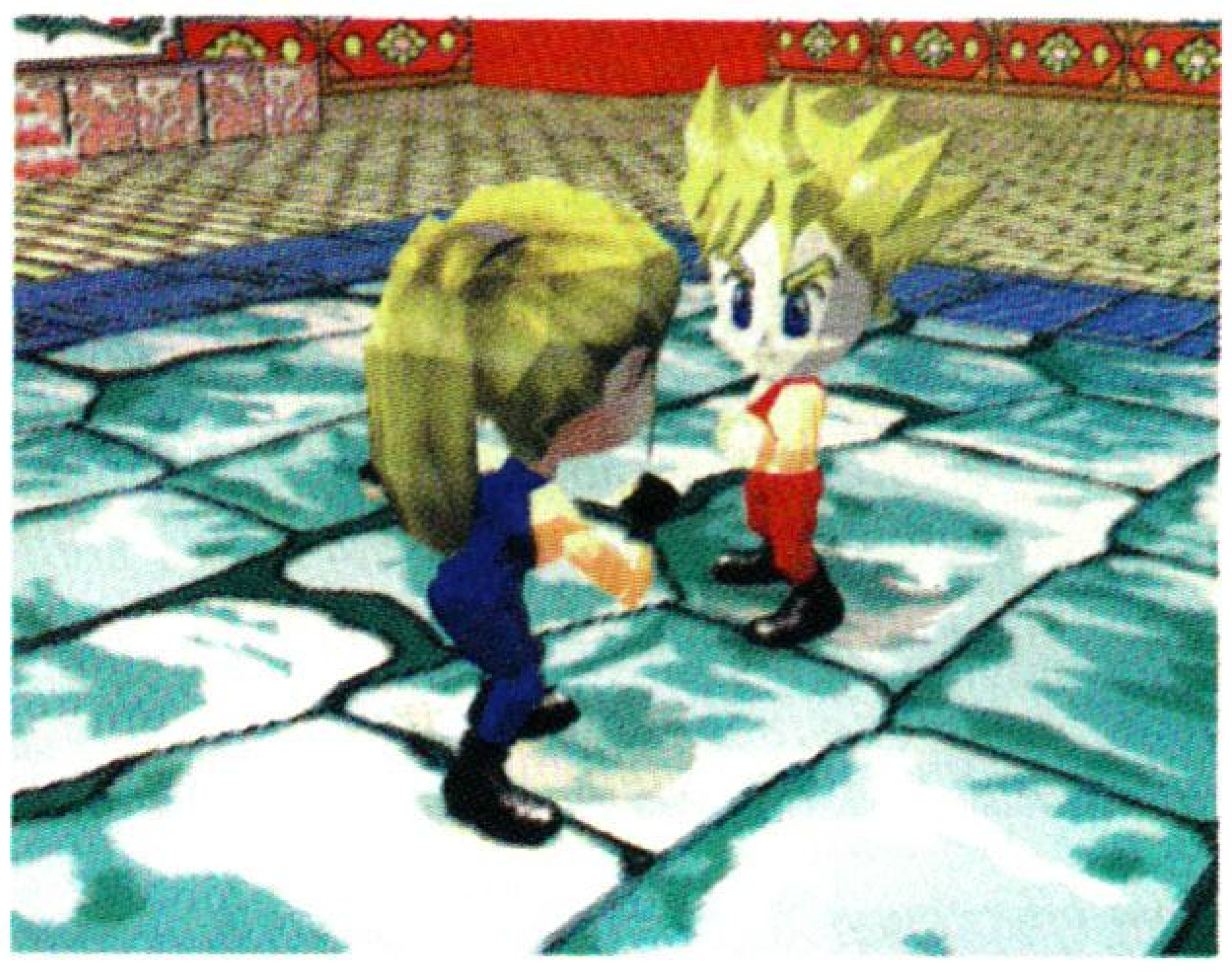
SEGA'S FIGHTING FRENZY!

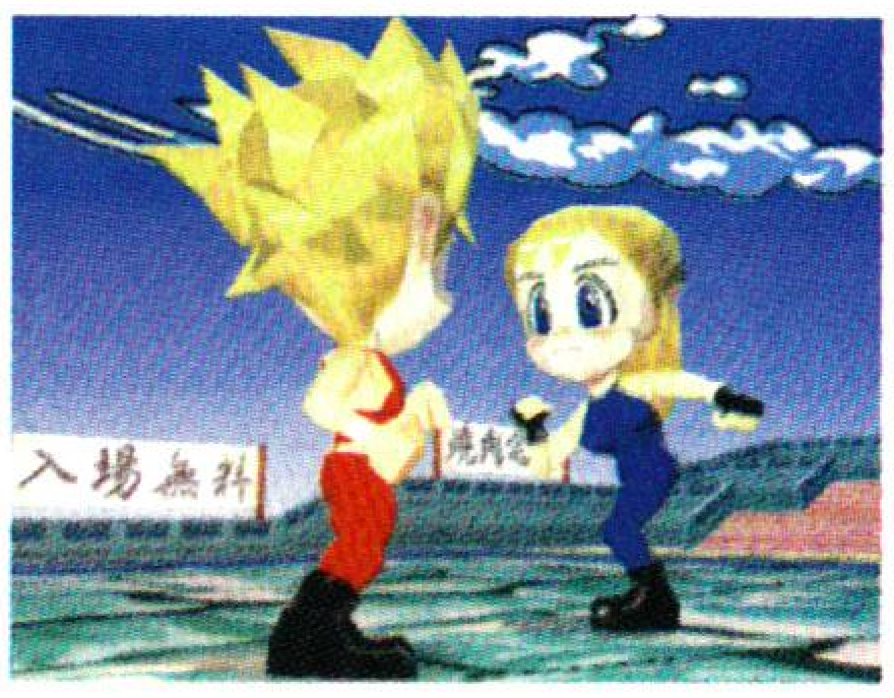
Sega AM Department Arcade Update

AM DIVISION UPDATE!

At the forefront of arcade development today, Sega's AM Research and Development Departments #2 and #3 and continuing to produce an array of exciting new titles. On these pages, we give you a fascinating preview of the arcade produce being lined up for the AOU Show at the end of February.

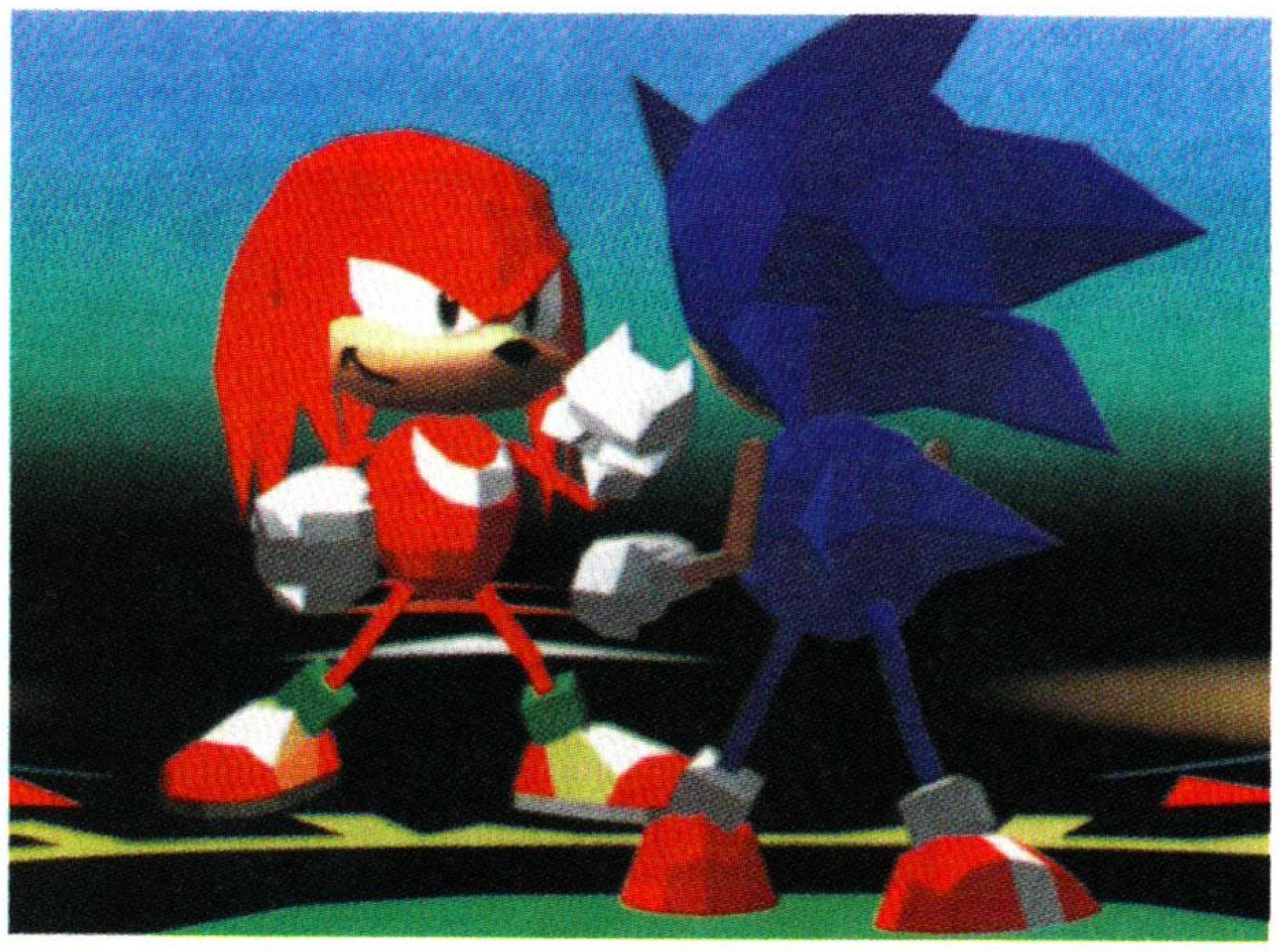
AM2 have two new fighting games lined for the show, both of which use the Model-2B technology. A game that's probably not even going to be released over here is Virtua Fighter Kids. AM2 have heeded criticism that their fighting games are probably a bit too complicated for the younger player, and so have created a special version of Virtua Fighter 2 especially for them. As you can see, special Super-Deformed versions of the characters battle it out on simplified versions of the VF2 backdrops.





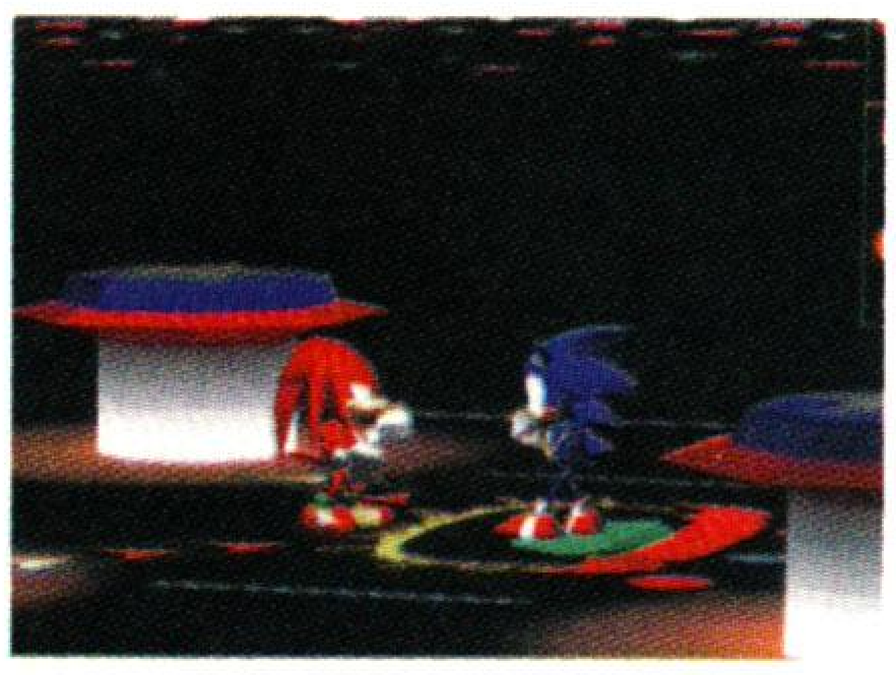
VIRTUA KIDS

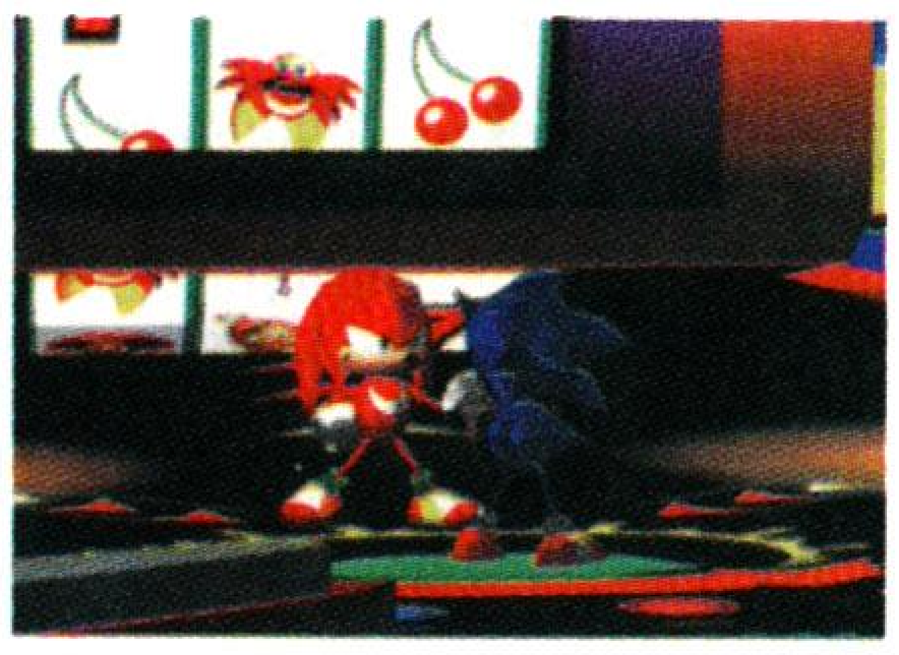
Jacky and Sarah face off in Super Deformed fashion. Don't hold your breath for a UK release...



While Fighting Vipers sorts out the usual Virtua Fighter 2 audience nicely , AM2 aim to increase the profile of Sonic the Hedgehog with their fighting game based on the icon character. A preliminary report on the game appeared in **MAXIMUM** issue #3, but this month AM2 released pictures of Knuckles the Echidna and dropped hints about a greater level of background interaction. A new background (the Casino Night Zone) appears in these pictures as well.

While these two titles have attracted some attention, the general belief is that AM2 are holding out on something *really special* that no-one's seen yet for the AOU (see the side texts for some heavy hints).

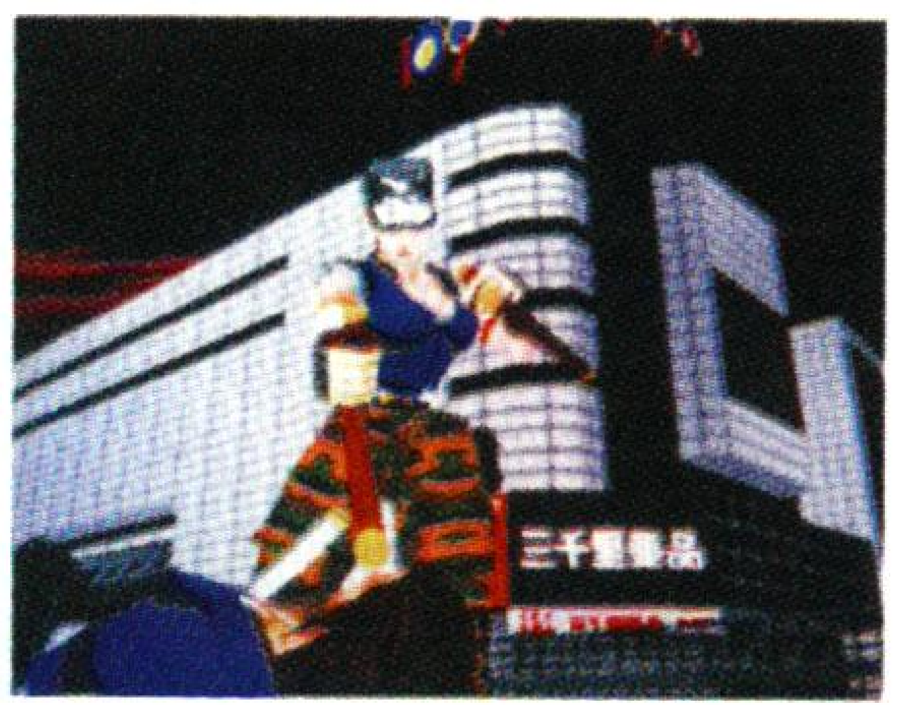


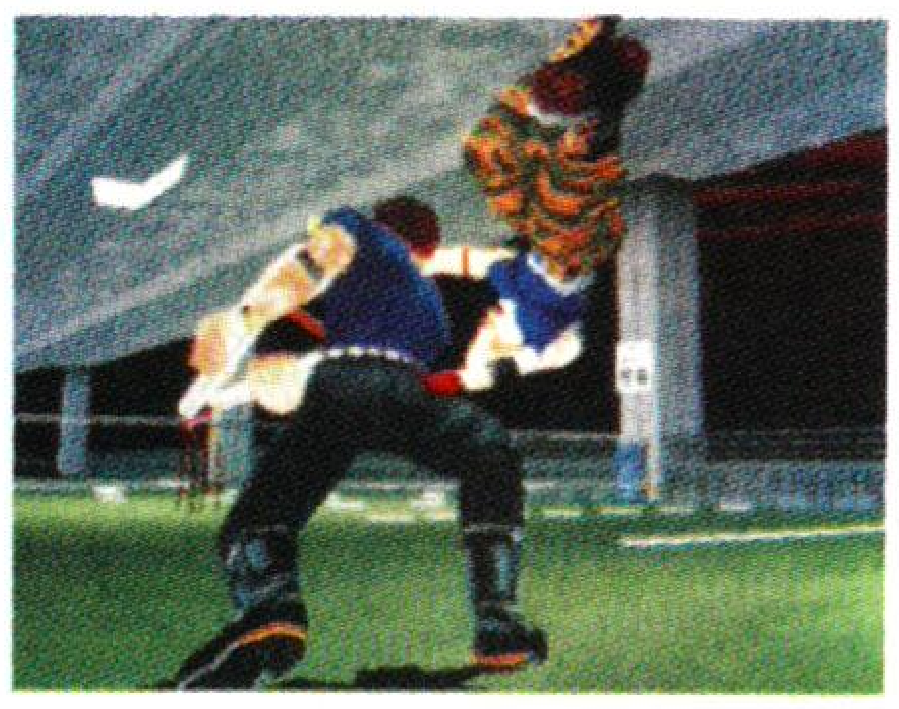


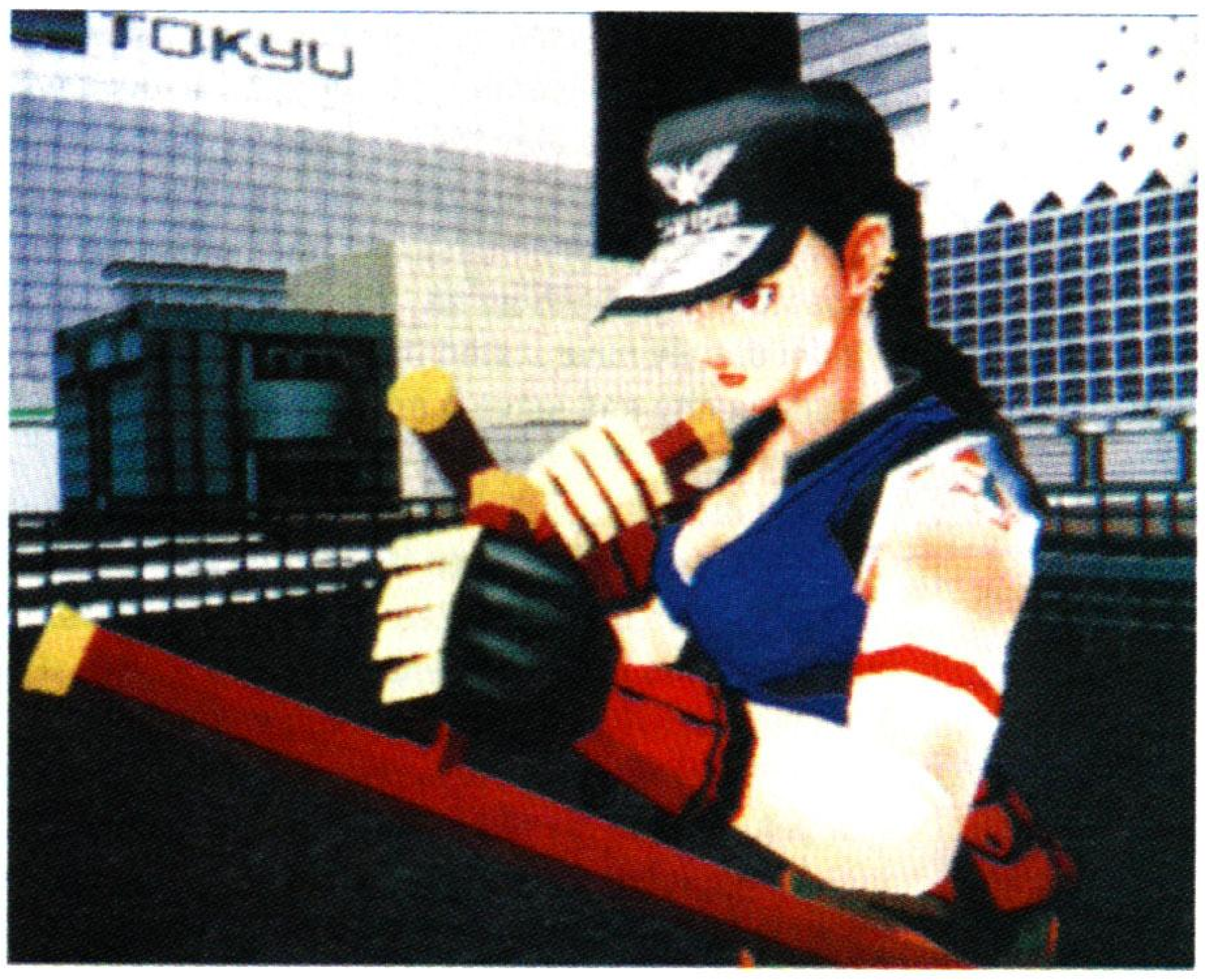
SONIC AND KNUCKLES

Knuckles has appeared in the latest batch of Sonic Fighting Game screenshots released by AM2. Expect some excellent backdrop interaction in this title.

Over at AM3, spirits are high. After releasing the breakthrough Sega Rally, the company have followed up with two sure-fire hits. Manx TT SuperBike received a rapturous reception at the recent ATEI Show in Earls Court (distributors Deith Leisure sold out - no mean feat considering that one Manx Deluxe sets the average arcade back £15,000) while the robot fighting game Virtual-On is currently doing big business in Japan. An AM3 product to look forward to at the AOU Show is a new 3D fighting title using the standard Model-2B board. Provisionally entitled Last Bronx, the first screenshots of this promising title are on this page. Clearly this is another weapons-based extravaganza, with American-style combatants slugging it out with the likes of night-sticks. More details in next month's AOU report.

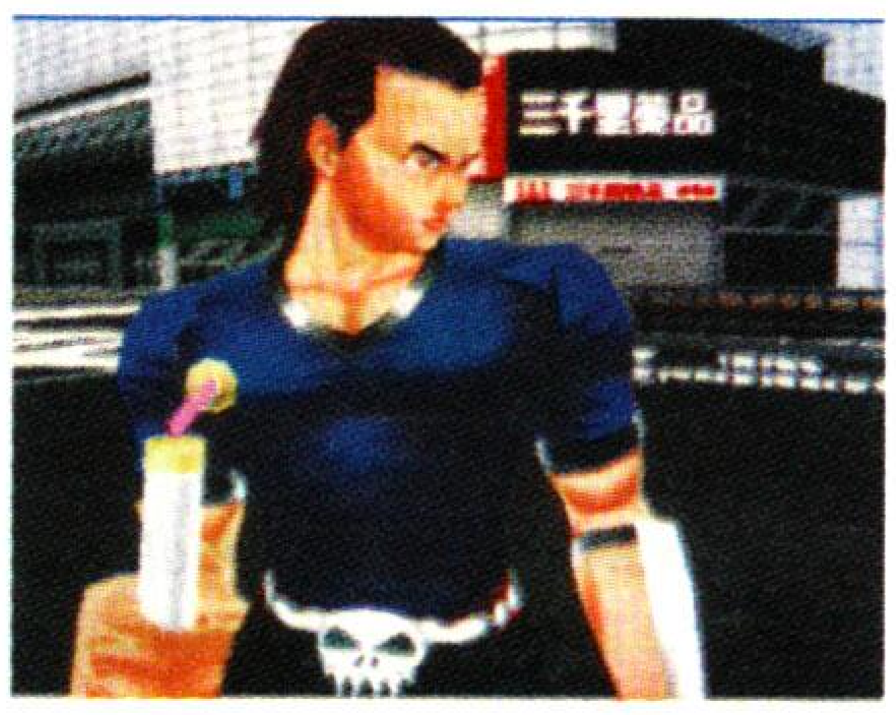






A BRONX TALE

AM3's entrance into the Model-2B fighting arena is set with the announcement of Last Bronx, an American style fighting game featuring night-sticks and, er, dynamite. This should be good...



MAXIMUM REVEALS AM SATURN PLANS!

Sega of Japan are clearly looking after the AM divisions considering the importance of their titles. Virtua Fighter 2 did the business in Japan, taking Saturn sales way ahead of Sony's whilst Sega Rally is practically selling the Sega machine on European shores. A tentative list of titles has been leaked from Sega's Japanese offices.

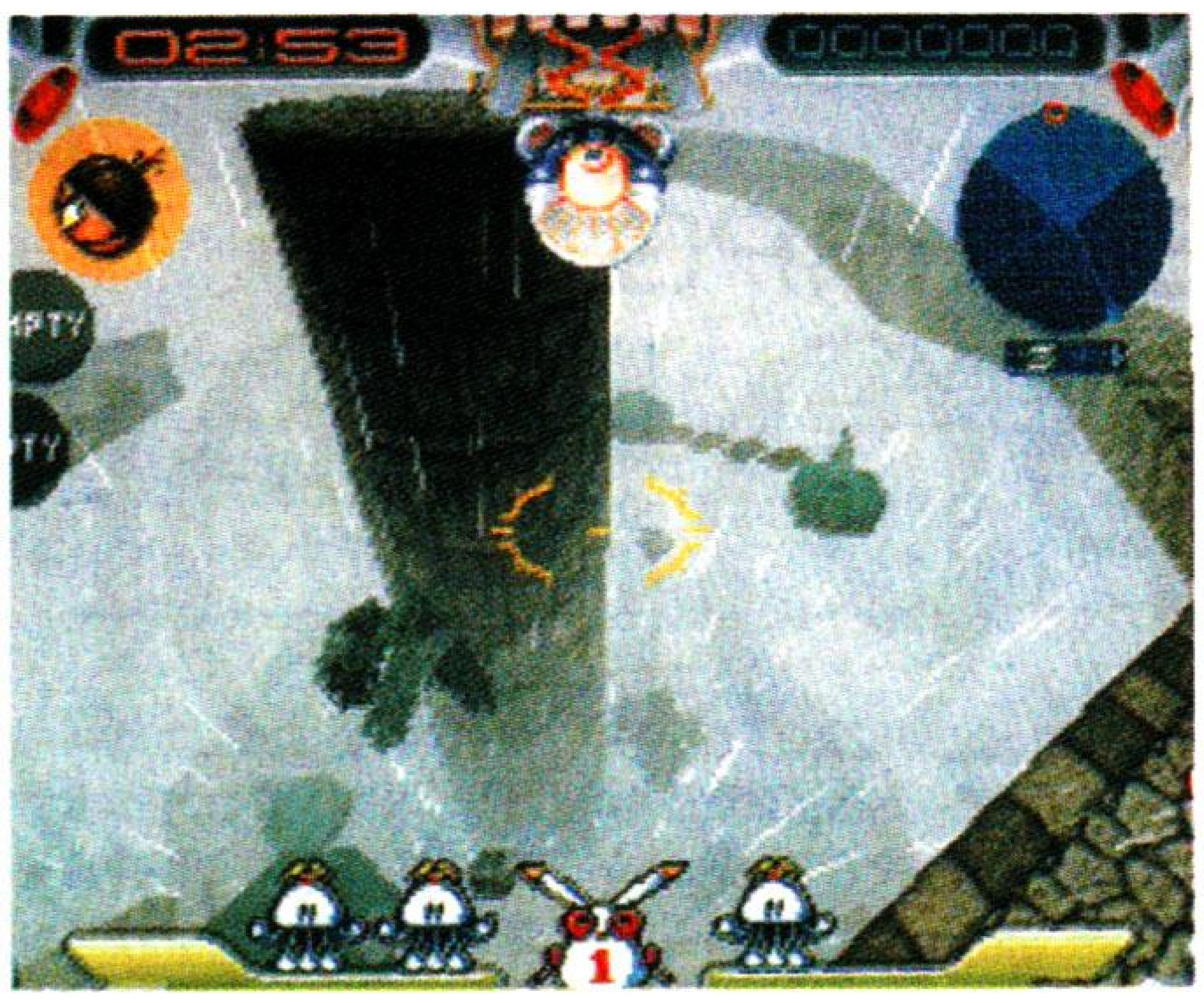
Two titles guaranteed for release in the Autumn are Virtual On and Fighting Vipers. The former title should pose no problems for the conversionsmiths (no team has been announced yet, but work is understood to have begun already) and is said to use the forthcoming Saturn communications cable for link-up action. Fighting Vipers is set for an October release, with AM2 handling the conversion themselves. Considering that a great deal of the donkey work has been done with the conversion of Virtua Fighter 2, Saturn owners should look forward

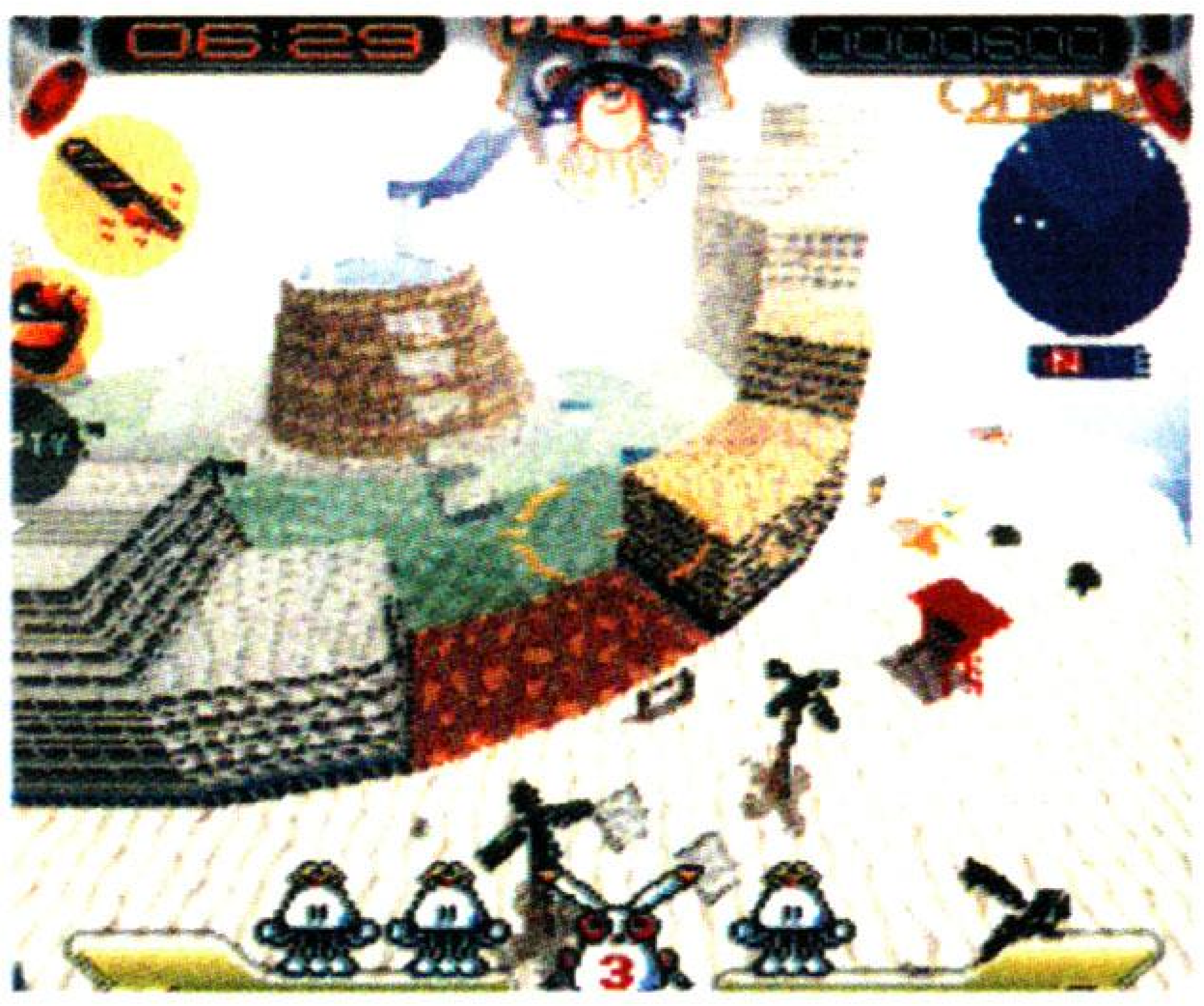
Sega aren't the only company planning an onslaught of new products at the AOU Show to be held in Japan at the end of February. The company's biggest rival, Namco, also has a wealth of new produce in the works which should make for an exciting show. Topping the list of new games is a sequel to the excellent Alpine Racer. The snow-based setting remains in the sequel, although this time you're in control a snowboard - hence the sequel's name: Alpine Surfer. Namco will also be revealing a 3D sequel to Xevious, which **MAXIMUM** is led to believe uses the PlayStation technology System 22 board. A sequel to the vastly under-rated Ace Driver is also planned to be unveiled at the AOU. The only detail released by Namco to date is the name - Ace Driver: Victory Lap...

Depending on the strength of the competition, Sega could well be showing a very early 40% complete version of the company's prospective top title: Virtua Fighter 3. It is not known whether Sega are keen on revealing their supposedly stunning new CG rendering technology whilst the competition are still catching up with the now standard Model-2B board.

to a hi-res 60 frames per second conversion. The question is, how will they handle the incredible 3D backdrops? **MAXIMUM** expects answers of some description when AM2 start talking to the press about the conversion in the next couple of months.

What would be considered a dead-cert for Saturn conversion: Manx TT SuperBike has still yet to be confirmed by Sega of Japan. The final say on whether a conversion will be attempted is down to AM3 team leader Tetsuya Mizuguchi and he has expressed doubts about the game being worth converting since so much of the game's excitement is derived from the cabinet. Watch this space.





COMING SOON: JUMPING FLASH 2

One of the most exciting PlayStation games in development has to SCE's sequel to Jumping Flash. The original was a graphically phenomenal, super-innovative 3D platformer that was excellent fun to play - the only problem being that the game was extremely easy to conquer, with the **MAXIMUM** team having completed it the same day we got it (hence a three-star review in issue #1).

Now the sequel is upon us and SCE have released the first screenshots, two of which you should discover on these pages. As you can see, the graphics look even more spectacular this time around with an even greater perception of depth evident. Extra special graphical effects are ready to go, such as rainfall on one particular stage (again, check out the screenshots). We can't say how excited we are about the release of this particular sequel - hopefully SCE won't do a Kileak, The Blood 2 and make it as easy to complete as the original game. We live in hope...

Expect coverage second to none in a forthcoming **MAXIMUM** Extended Play.

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DIE HARD: YIPPEE KAHEY MUDDY FUNSTER!

PS
FOX
SEGA SATURN VERSION IN DEVELOPMENT
DIE HARD TRILOGY
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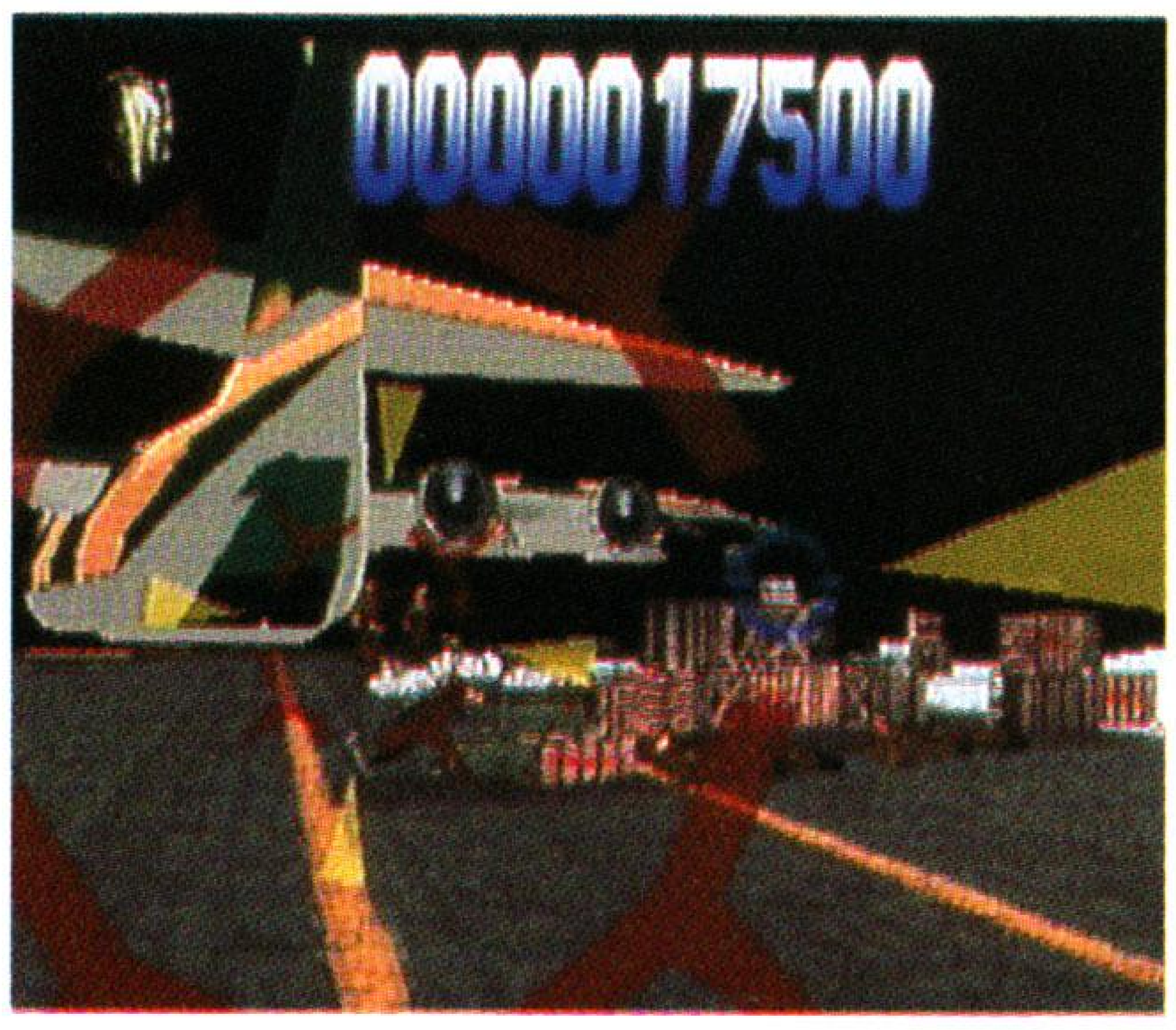
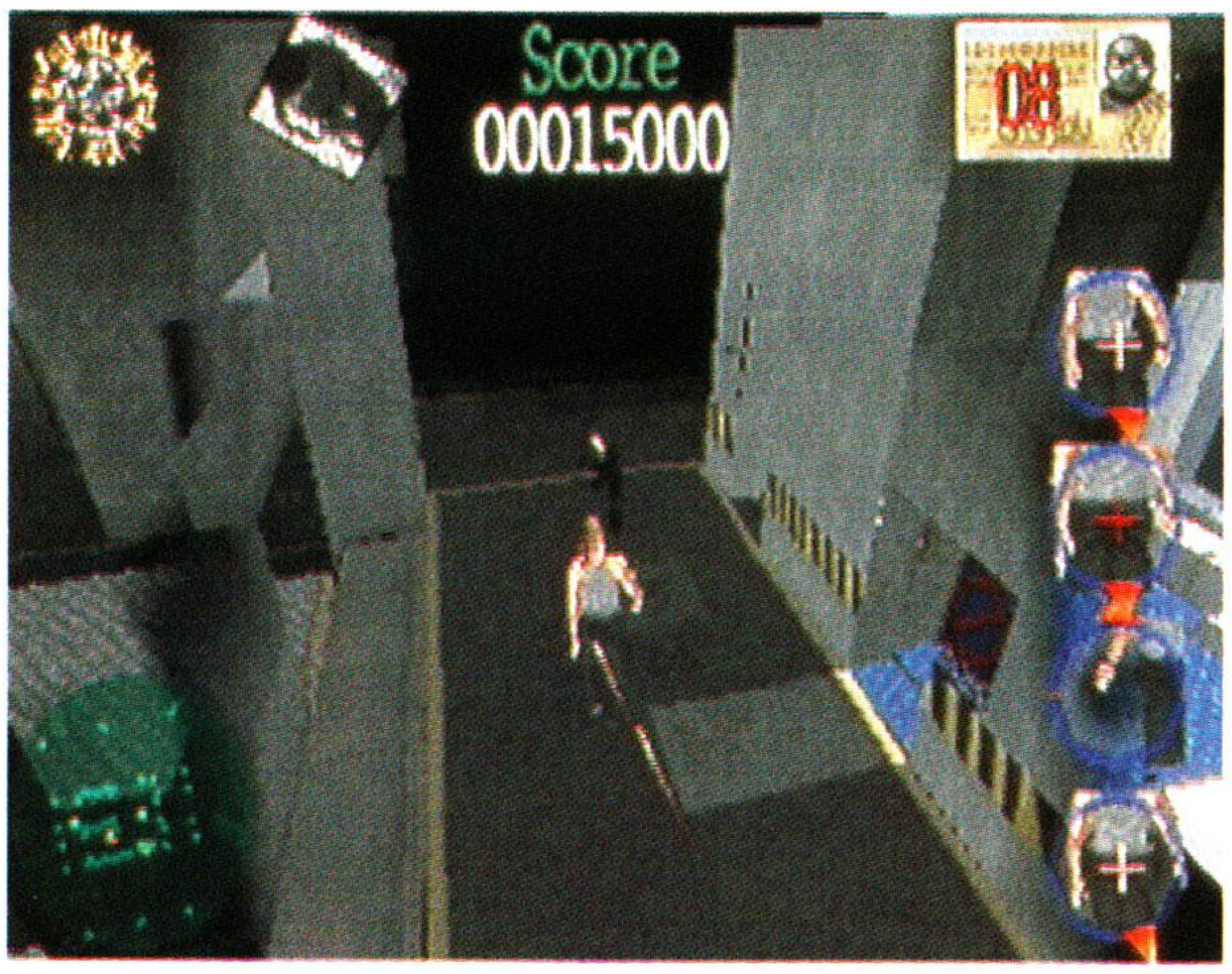


Newcomers to the UK, Fox Interactive, are set to explode onto the next generation console with Saturn and PlayStation adaptations of the Die Hard movies. Intrigued by the possibilities these action movies could present for a video game, **MAXIMUM** took a trip to Probe Software's Croydon offices to get the full story.

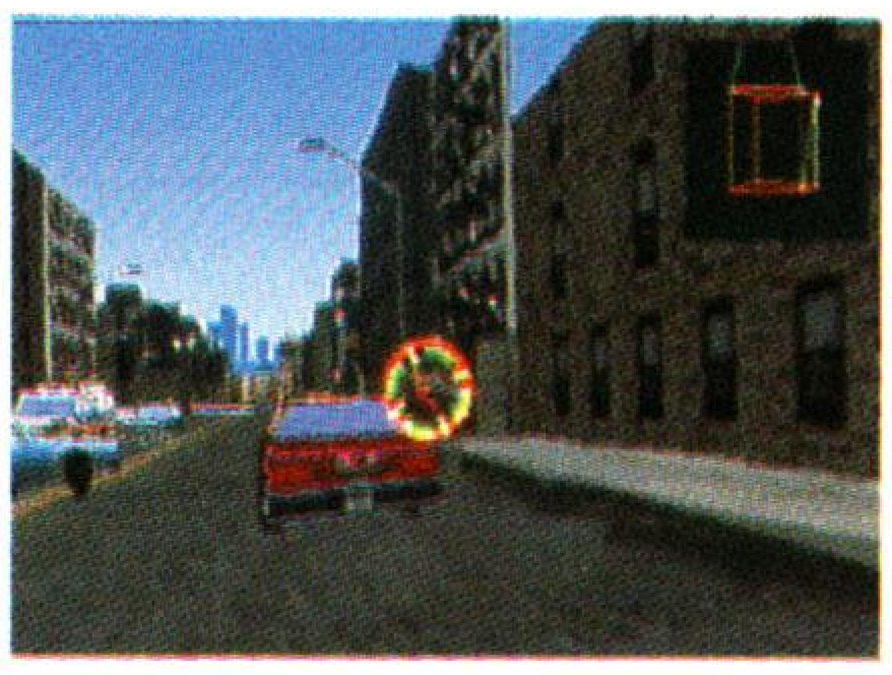
This game is actually three licenses in one, and goes by the name of Die Hard Trilogy. It's so-called for three reasons: one is the fact that the game is actually based on all three movies, and secondly, it's actually three different Die Hard games in one value pack.

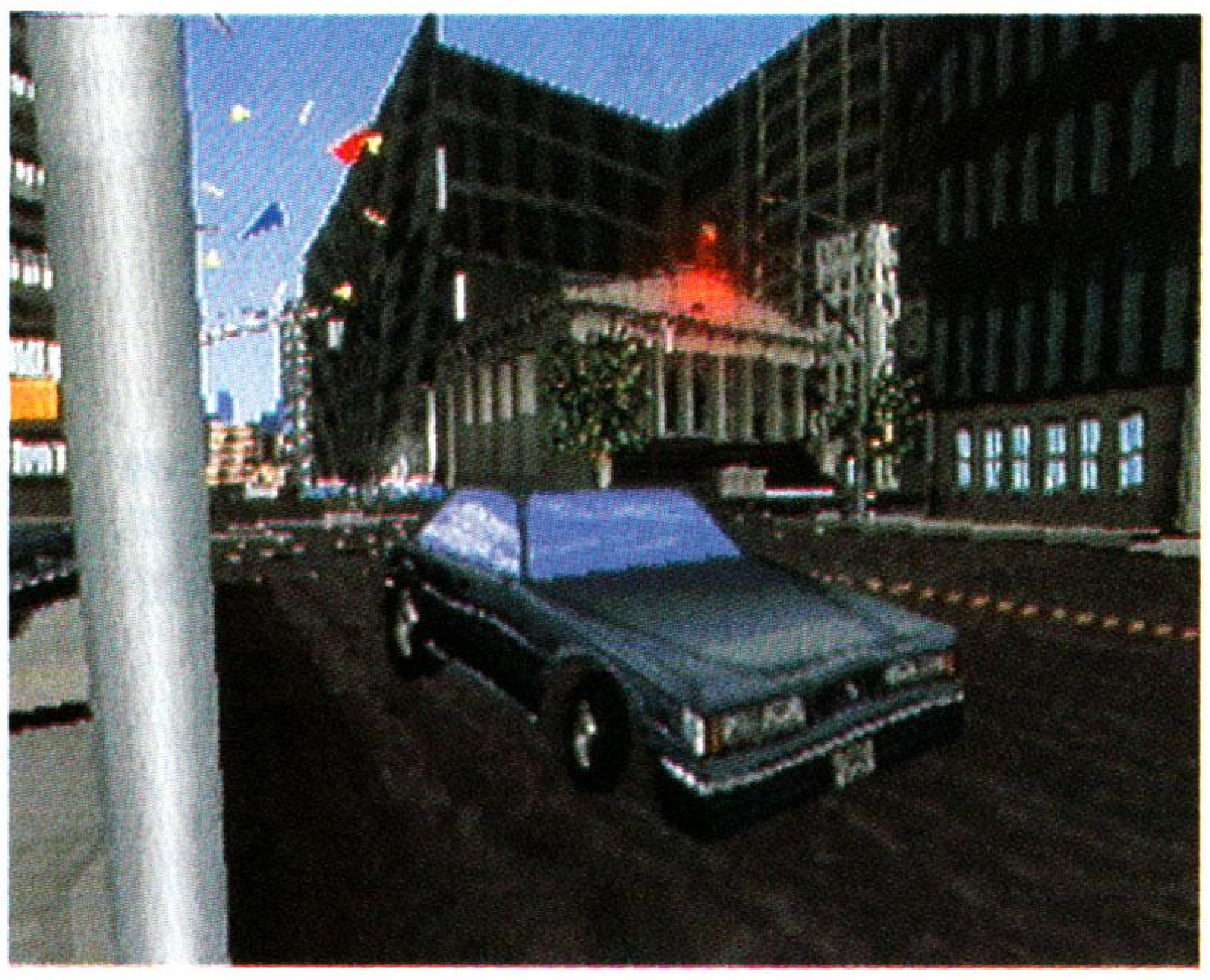
The first game pits bare-footed uber-cop John McClane (you) against arch-villain Hans Gruber, who together with his German pals has taken over Nakatomi Plaza in Los Angeles. This is an excuse for an epic blastathon of not inconsiderable proportions as you take out the terrorists in true Fade to Black/ Lone Soldier style. In a bit of a departure from the movie, the action takes place over fourteen levels (make that stories) with a grand showdown in the penthouse. Incidentally, this level is by far the most promising game of the three.

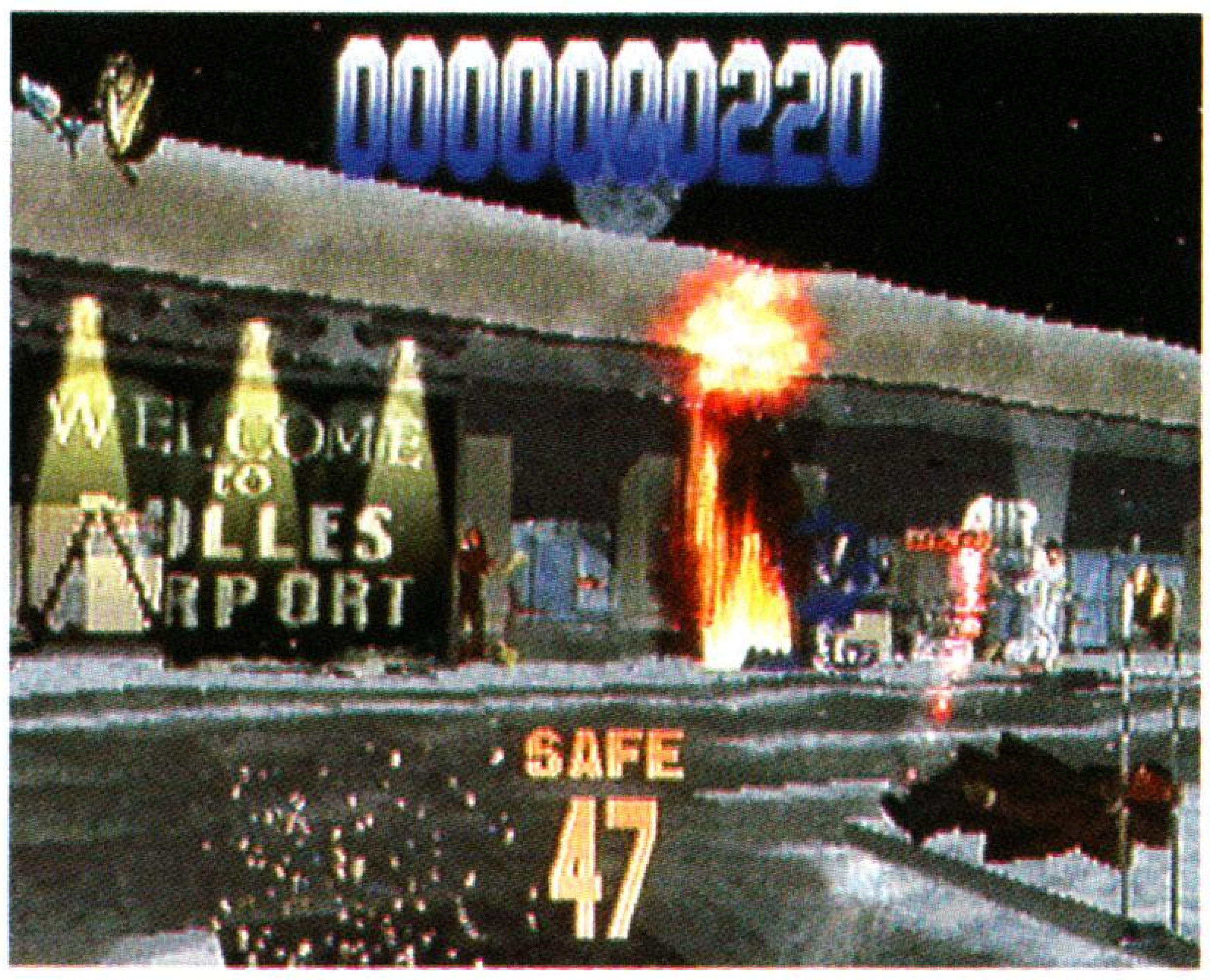


The second game is based on Die-Hard 2: Die Harder and features McClane doing battle with, er, terrorists who have taken over Washington airport. The movie has the somewhat dubious reputation of having the highest number of on-screen fatalities in any movie (allegedly), so Probe have adapted this to take on the style of a Virtua Cop clone. Oddly enough, the programmer of this game seemed to have a particular grudge against Virtua Cop, thinking that his title was significantly better. Well, to be honest, this is the weakest of the three Die Hard games on offer at the moment, with the shootable enemies looking polygonally challenged compared to the VC bad guys. Hopefully this will be sorted out by the time the game is finished.

DIE HARD ACTION!
The shots on this page show the three different Die Hard games on offer in this trilogy triple pack. Much like the films, the first is definitely the best. The Fade to Black style game (above) packs in far more playability, although With A Vengeance (right) isn't bad either.



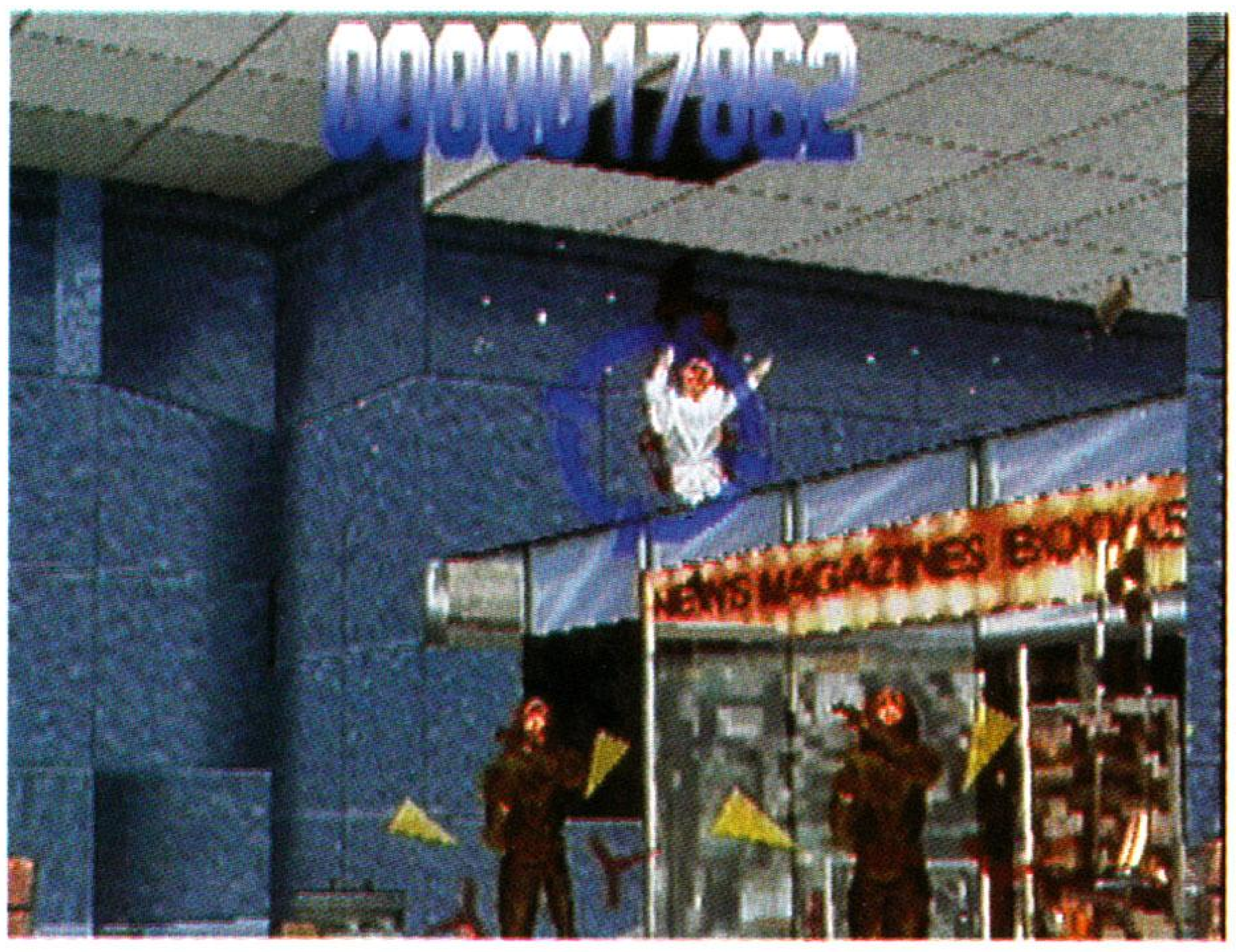




The final game is based on the latest McClane masterpiece, Die Hard with a Vengeance and puts the hero back in his home town of New York. In this stage, Hans Gruber's brother turns up to cause McClane some hassle. He's planted bombs around the city and it's up to you to commandeer some transport (there's a choice of 15 different vehicles on offer) and burn around the streets of New York in true Twisted Metal fashion, reaching each bomb before it explodes. Graphically superior, Die Hard with a Vengeance looks like being quite an impressive segment of the overall game.

Explosive action based on the renowned action movies!

IT'S VIRTUA COP...
"No, it's not," claim developers Probe, who claim that the Die Hard 2: Die Harder section is far superior to the AM2 title. Well from what we've seen Prove have got a lot more work to do before it matches up to the Sega game. Find out more closer to the Summer release date.



This game has been in development for quite some time now over at Probe and it's clear that the coders are pretty competent and seem set to hand in an impressive blasting/racing title that should do the Die Hard heritage proud. Our opinions of the game in its 80% complete form are fairly promising, so hopefully once the problems have been sorted out this should be a title well worth investigation. With most of the hard work out of the way know, Die Hard Trilogy is well on target to meet its Summer 1996 release date.

That being the case, expect some more coverage in subsequent editions of **MAXIMUM**.

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MAXIMUM NEWS

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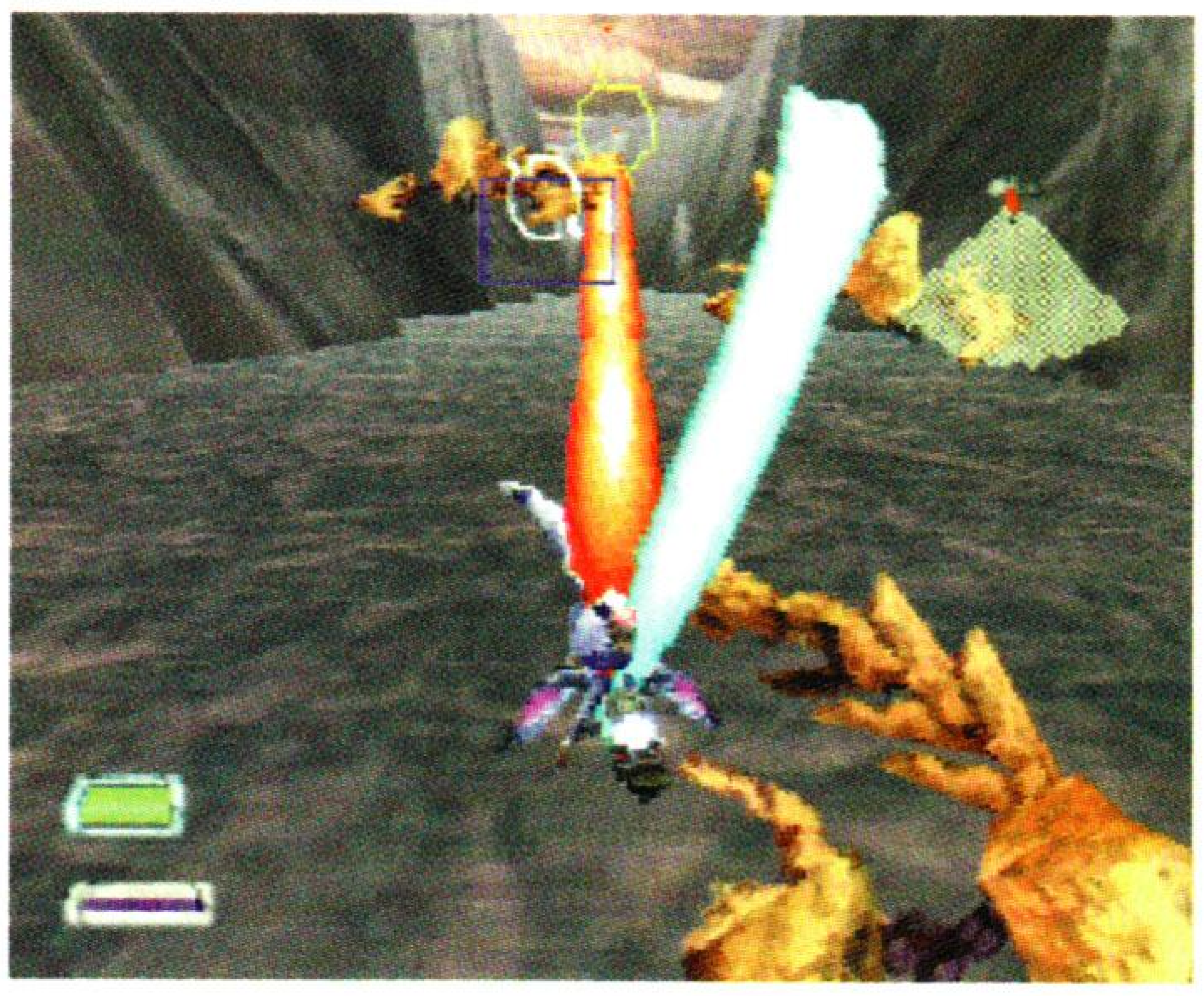
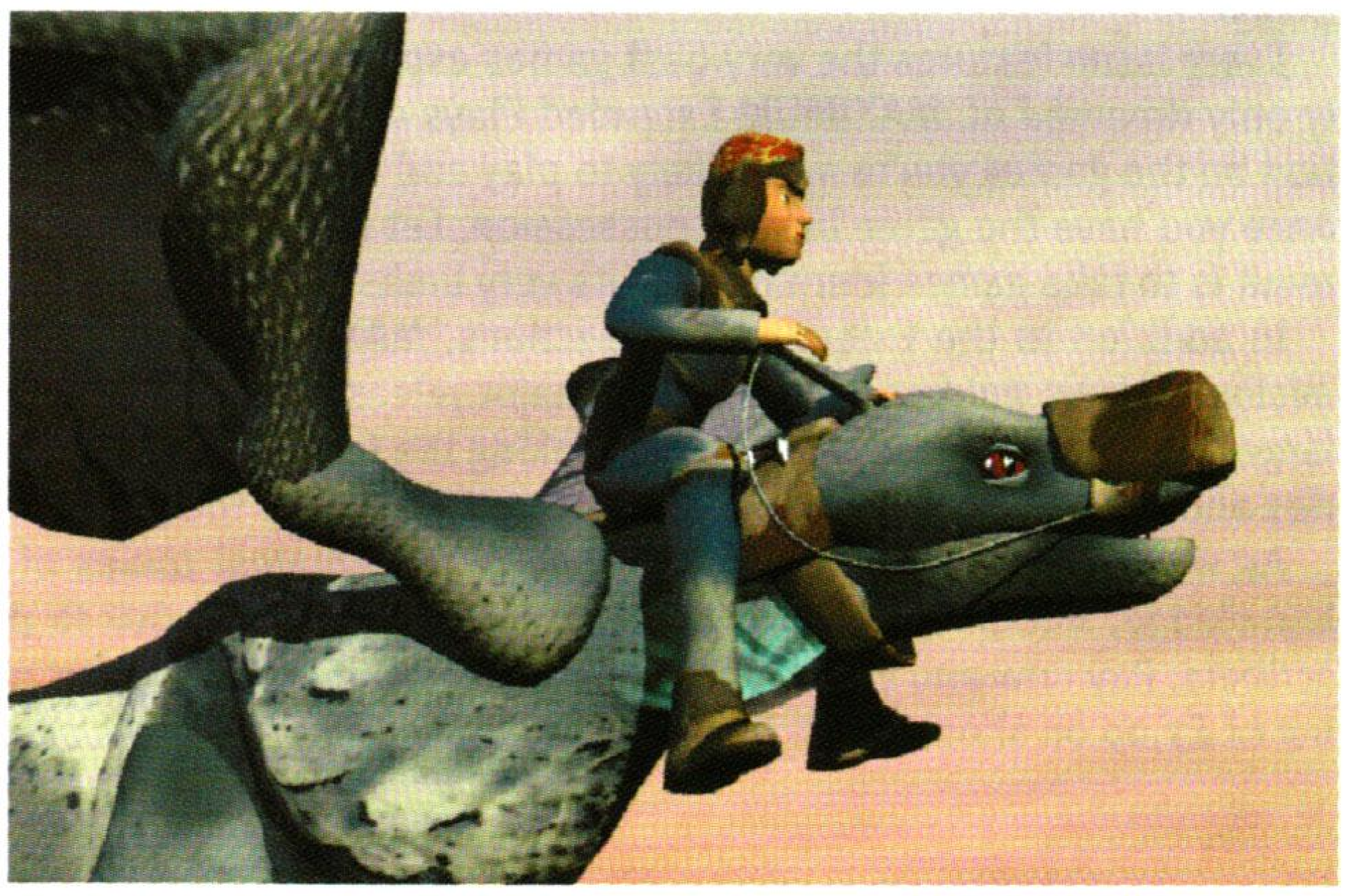
PANZER DRAGOON 2
SEGA AVAILABLE MARCH IN **JAPAN** PRICE **TBA**

DRAGOON SEQUEL TAKES FLIGHT

PANZER DRAGOON 2

Last month, MAXIMUM brought you the very first development pictures of Team Andromeda's Panzer Dragoon 2. At the time, only one level of the game was complete – although the game's superior quality was already beginning to show. This month, the team have completed no less than three levels of the game and have begun work on a fourth. Naturally, the MAXIMUM team were invited to see the spoils...





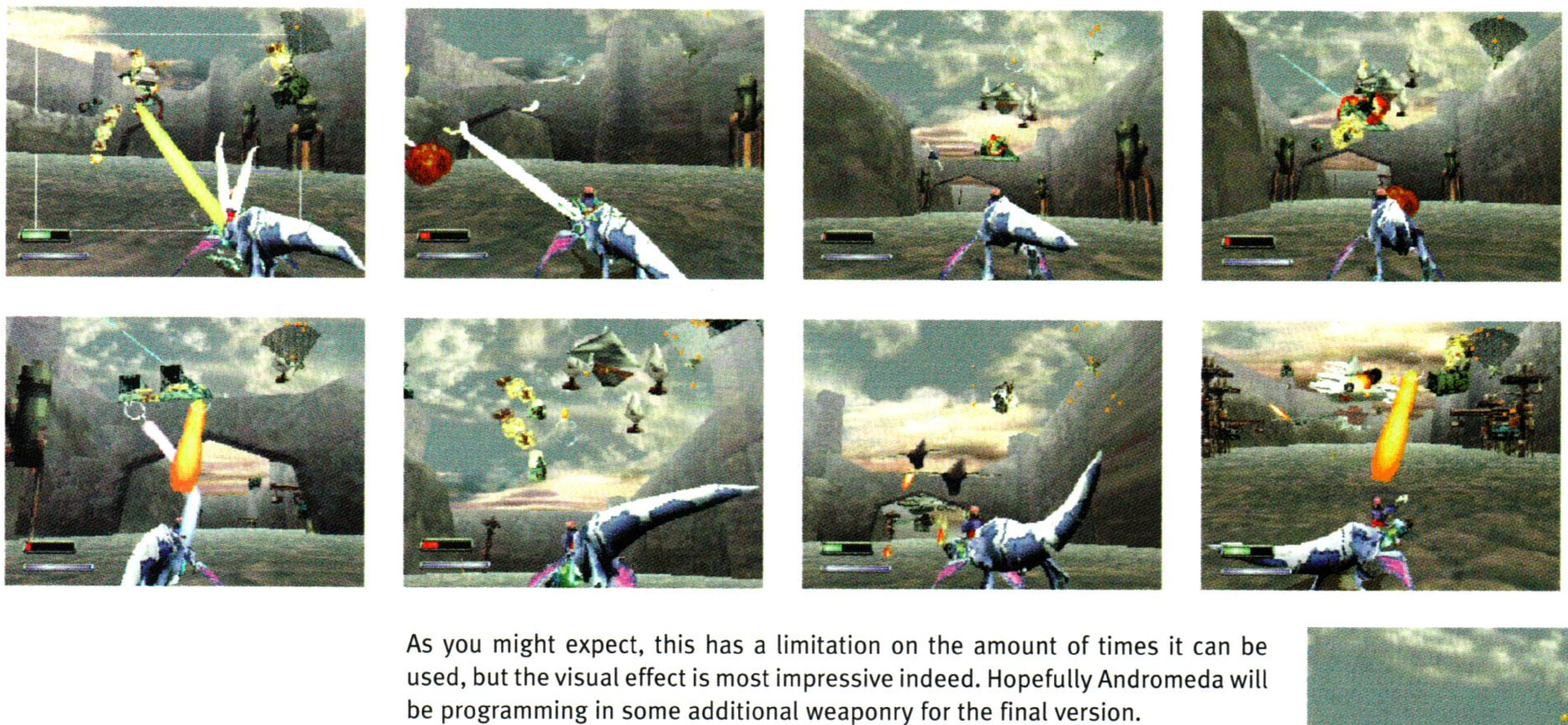
If you put last month's version of Panzer Dragoon 2 side by side with the latest copy, currently under lock and key at Sega Europe's HQ, you'd be amazed at the difference between the two. Although the game is still less than half finished, programmers Team Andromeda have managed to top the original game (already the most expensive console game in history in terms of development) and have put together another shoot 'em up that is quite simply, stunning.

New for this month is the game's intro. As in the original title, it's a fairly lengthy FMV sequence of extremely high quality. And it sees the trusty dragon growing from a mere dragolette to a mythical creature of enormous proportions. Of course, the trusty master from the first game appears once again to train the creature and prepares him for the battle of his life.

Level one remains very similar to the version we brought you last month, although more detail has been added to the landscapes, and plenty more enemies have been programmed in, plus the character is now able to use the "berserker" mode. This was not available in the first game and basically gives you the ability to let all of your weapons off at once – very useful when facing the huge enemy bosses in the game.

CG IN-GAME ACTIVITY
At times the action halts for a second, allowing you to savour some excellent rendered FMV sequences. Team Andromeda are going to do us proud...

Team Andromeda continue work on the stunning sequel! Four levels of the game almost complete! Better graphics and more involved gameplay are guaranteed!

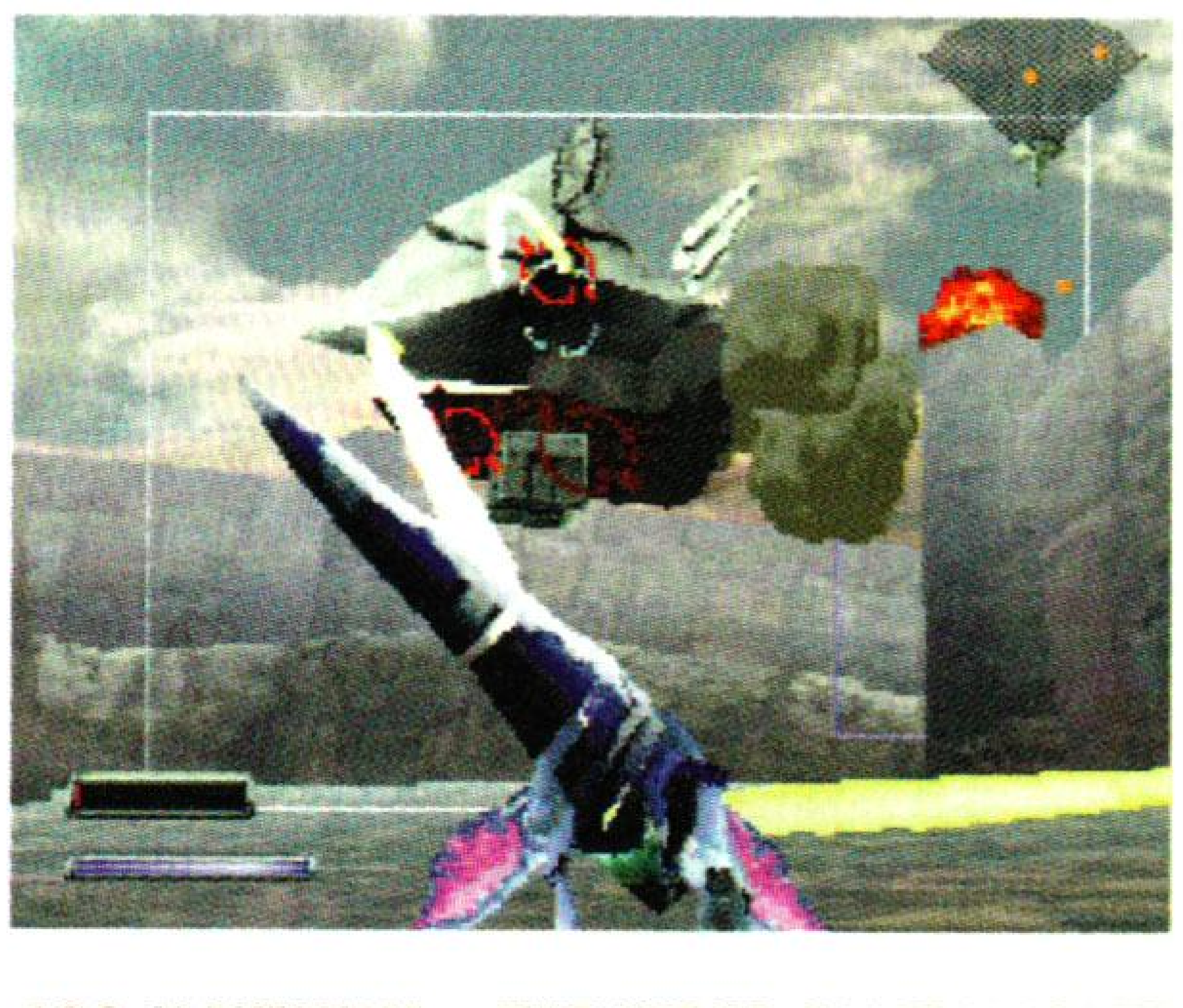


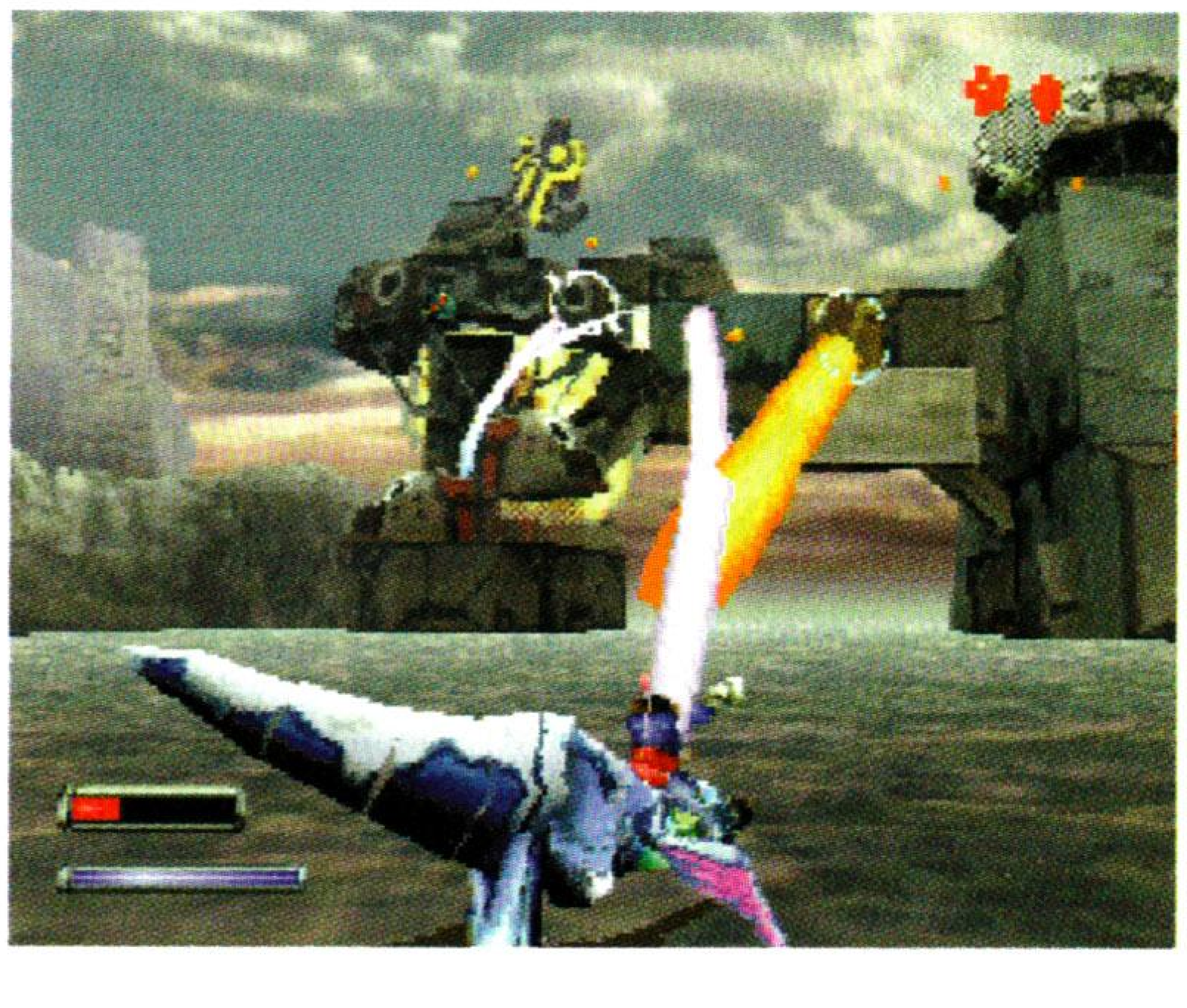
ACTION MONTAGE
If there was one thing that Andromeda can be counted on for, it's the quality of the end-level bosses. The sequence to the left features a pitched battle between the dragon and the first end-of-level monstrosity. These shots also show off the new land-based aspects of the Panzer Dragoon gameplay. Yes, indeed, this will be an excellent game.

As you might expect, this has a limitation on the amount of times it can be used, but the visual effect is most impressive indeed. Hopefully Andromeda will be programming in some additional weaponry for the final version.

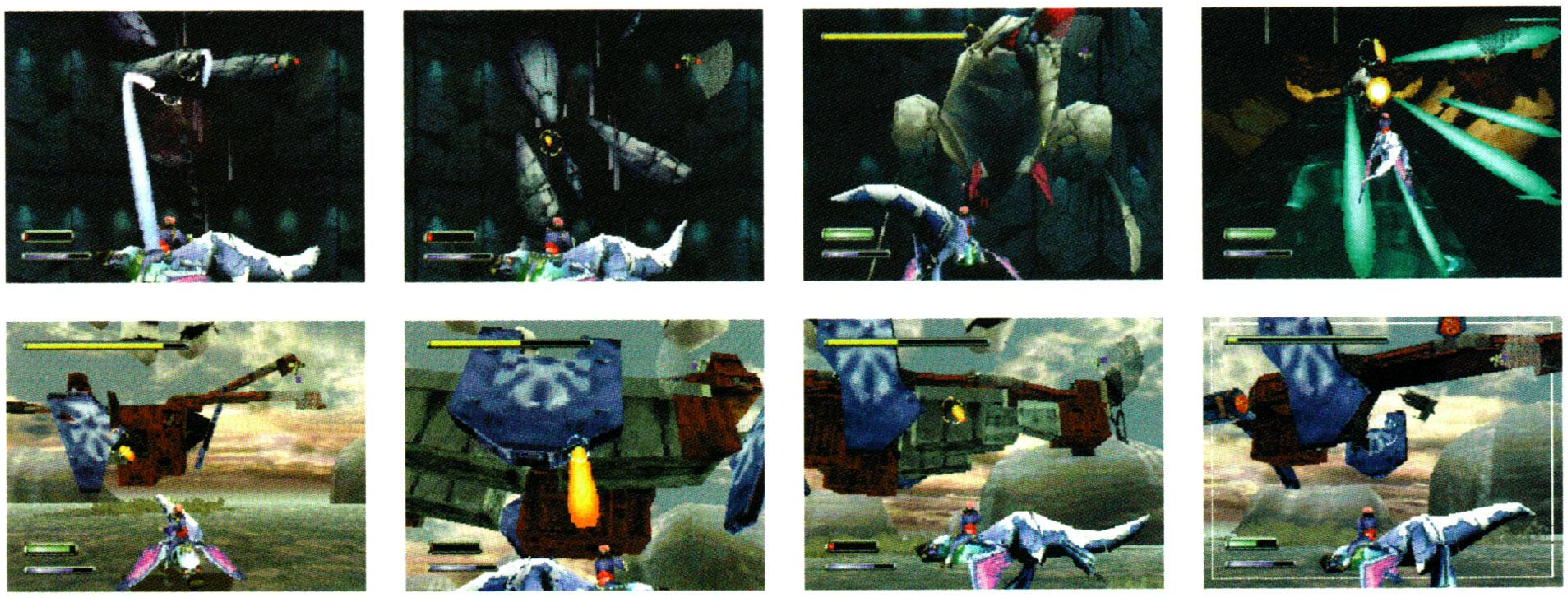
However, probably more impressive than the stark landscapes of the first level are the subsequent three levels in the game, two of which are over half-finished. All three of the levels include huge, intricately detailed bosses and the action is more frenetic than ever! For instance in level two, the action suddenly becomes really tough, as airborne enemies blast at you from all directions, making the gameplay even more difficult than in the original game.

For levels three and four, there's a bit of a departure from the first Panzer Dragoon, and it's in these levels that you'll get to see more original action. Level three takes place in a dense jungle and features some of the most stunning graphics yet seen on the Saturn. Huge enemies including a creepy giant spider pop out from the undergrowth and shards of light break through the foliage,





A new level of Saturn 3D visuals is promised for the finished version of Panzer Dragoon 2!

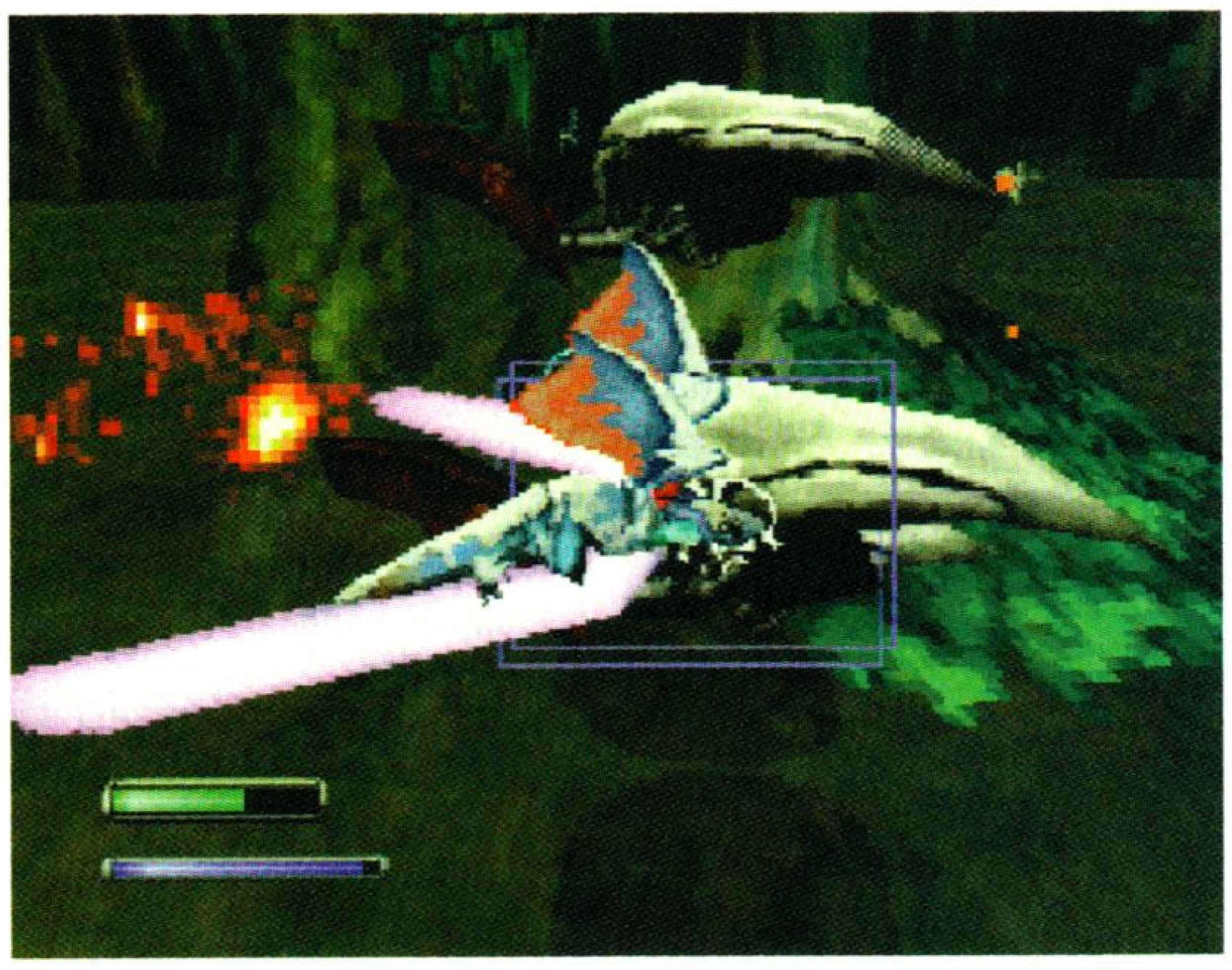


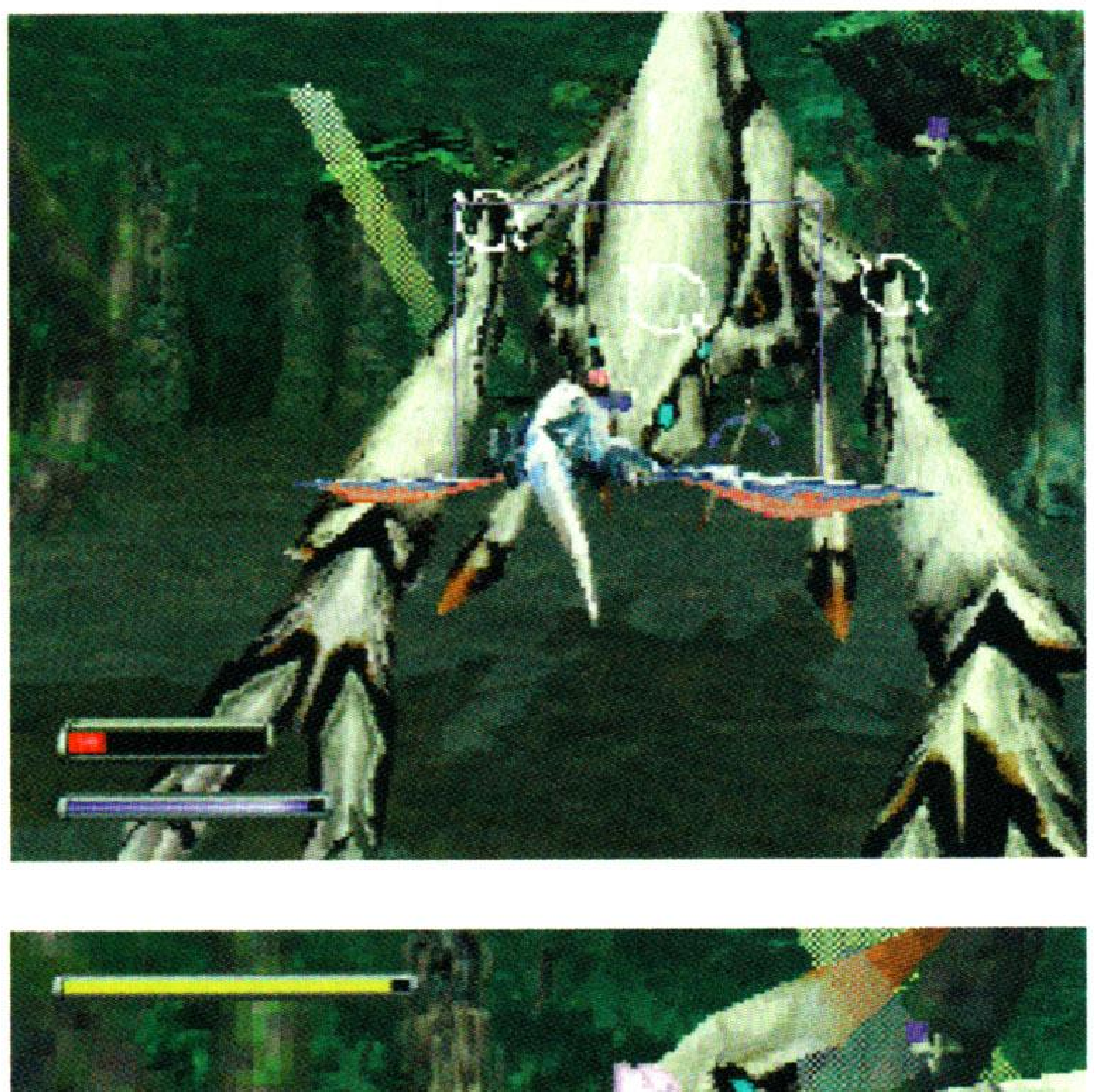
LAND AND AIR

Panzer Dragoon 2 features different sections set on land (where the dragon sprints across the ground) as well as the more familiar airborne segments. To be frank, the difference in the gameplay isn't quite so pronounced at the time of writing, but who knows what new additions Team Andromeda are planning to include in the final version of the game?

Saturn CG FMV is taken to new levels in Andromeda's Panzer sequel!

Ground-based blasting meets familiar airborne blasting action!





casting areas of brilliant light onto the otherwise shady forest. This is another level where both flying and crawling is required, and the sheer quality of the visuals is astounding. It's when you see levels like this that you get a grand idea of the potential visuals we can expect to see in the final product.

However, by far the most impressive level of all so far is the less than half-finished level four. This takes place in a dank tunnel, where your dragon splishes his way through water, before facing oversized enemy bosses in an underground cavern. The water effects in this level are already looking amazing, and although this stage isn't even half finished, it's already looking totally stunning, although it has to be said that the version we saw was littered with bugs, preventing us from bringing you any decent screenshots. It's clear to see that the game features a number of excellent new technical tricks developed by Andromeda since completing the first Panzer game. Hopefully, since that around 12 months have passed since the first game, they have been able to take their 3D expertise even further and this should result in some levels that look even better than the examples pictured here.

Panzer 2 also features a great line in in-game full-motion video CG movies, which are set to expand the storyline. Although nothing concrete has been confirmed as of yet, it is believed that this will all help set the scene for a forthcoming Panzer Dragoon role-playing game, which is set to combine the incredible visuals of the Panzer game with the usual, deep involving RPG questing.

Although Team Andromeda have been working flat out in the project to ready it for a late March release in Japan, there's still a fair way to go before the title will be anywhere near finished. And with graphics and gameplay of this quality, they really will be pushing both the programming team and the Saturn to its limits.

At the moment, there's still no official word on when the game will appear in the UK, but as there isn't a major amount of translation work to be done, conversion time should be minimised – leaving it simply a matter of converting the Japanese code to European PAL. And, in line with Sega's current crop of top-drawer releases, you can expect to see a full-speed, full-screen final product.

Our coverage of Panzer Dragoon 2 will continue apace in forthcoming editions of **MAXIMUM**. Our Japanese correspondent is on the case as we speak, and provided that we can wrest Andromeda away from their development kits, we might well see an interview arrive on our desks in time for **MAXIMUM** issue #5...

Think you've seen Panzer somewhere before? Well, it's just possible that this may be true. Panzer Dragon is based on Jean Giraud's graphic novels, created over twenty years ago in Giraud's native country, France. A character named Arzach appears in many of the novels and being the worrier that he is, he takes to the skies on a concrete dragon in search of a more peaceful environment. it seems that Team Andromeda admired both the stories and the artist's graphical style, and decided to base their adventure loosely around this character. Jean has created several books for his Moebius series and it seems that little else other than the dragon and character has been lifted for the Panzer title. This is probably because most of the storylines are just far too rude for a videogame.

Moebius has made quite a name for himself in recent years, having done a lot of work for American comic companies. In fact, he is credited as working on one of the very first graphic novels produced - an incredible Silver Surfer book produced in association with the original SS writer - a certain Stan Lee.

It may be hard to believe, but the original Panzer Dragoon is the most expensive video game ever created. At the time, the Saturn had never seen anything as stunning, and while the game concept is basically a re-hash of the traditional shoot 'em genre, the graphics were completely stunning. Whether the follow-up will break the previous record is as yet unknown, although the differences between the sequel and the original certainly indicate a much more stunning and advanced product. Let's hope eh?

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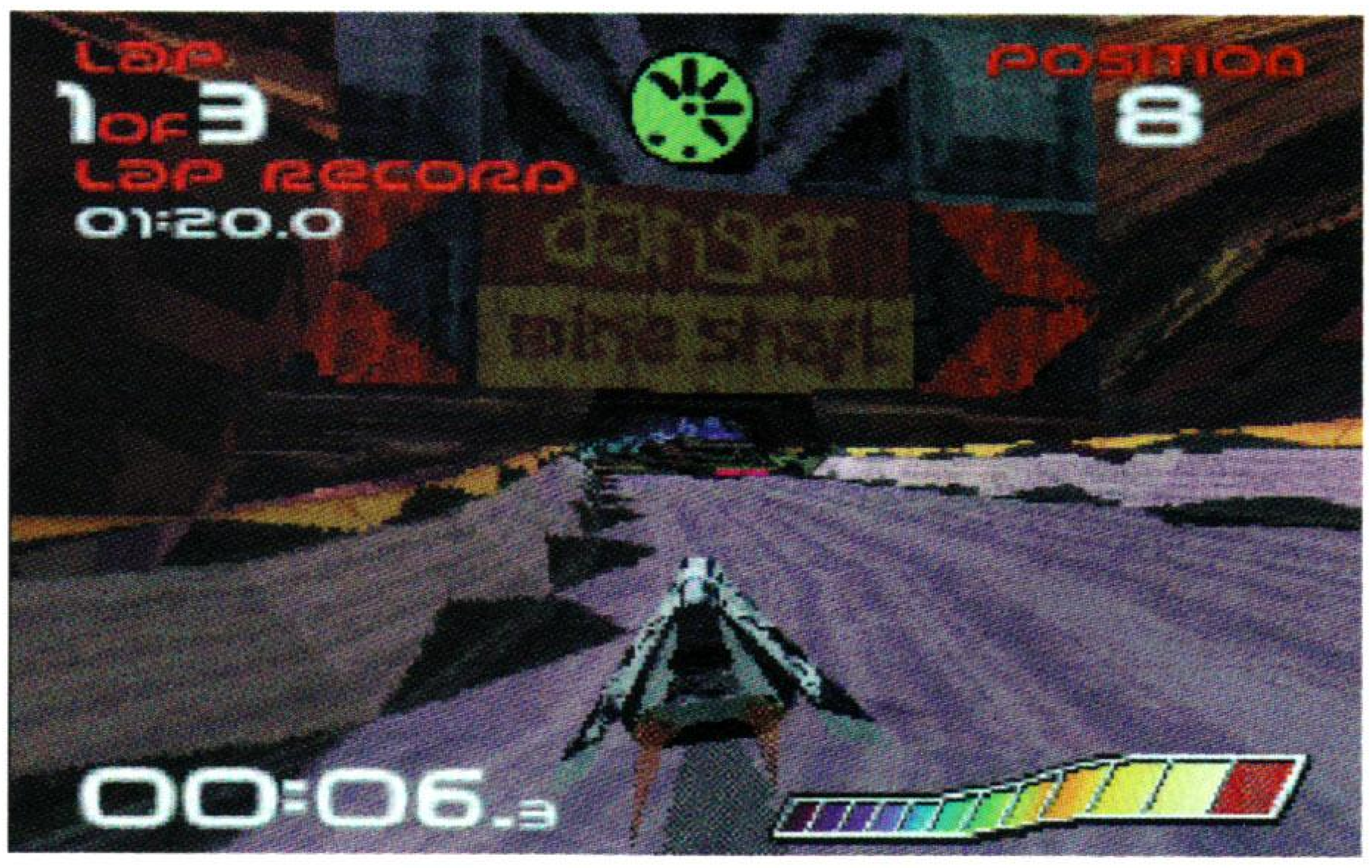
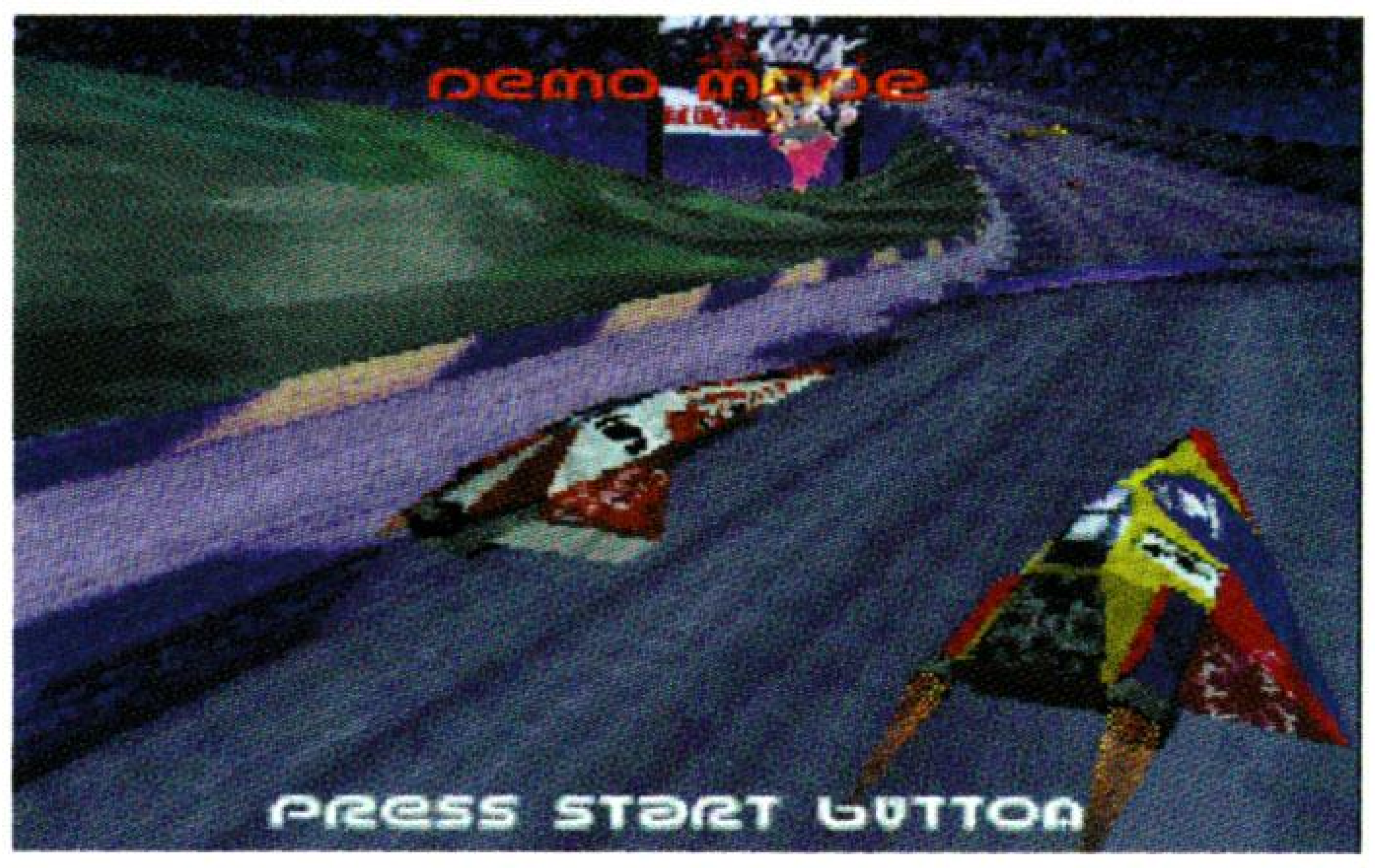
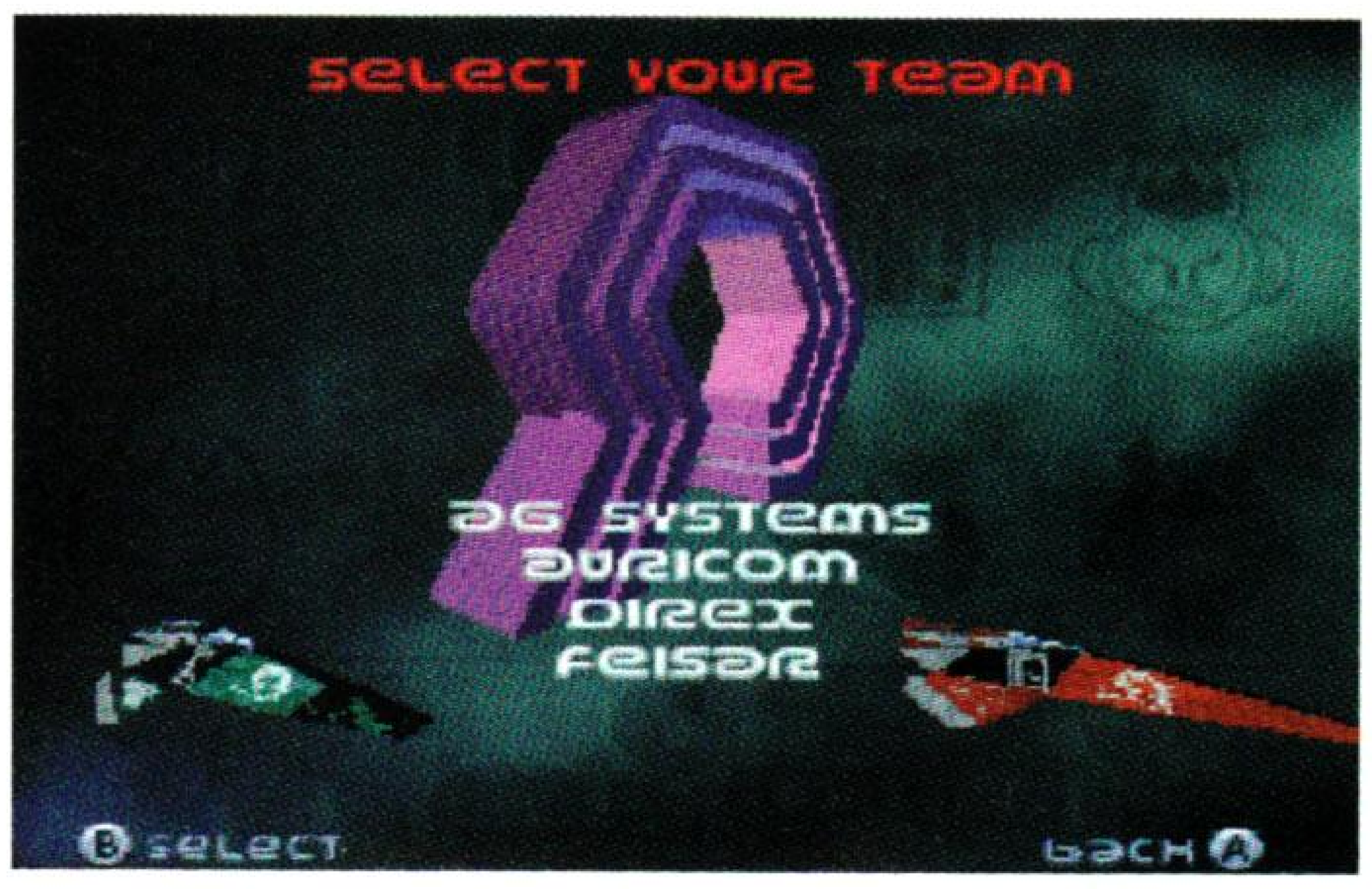
THE LONG-AWAITED CONVERSION
WIPEOUT

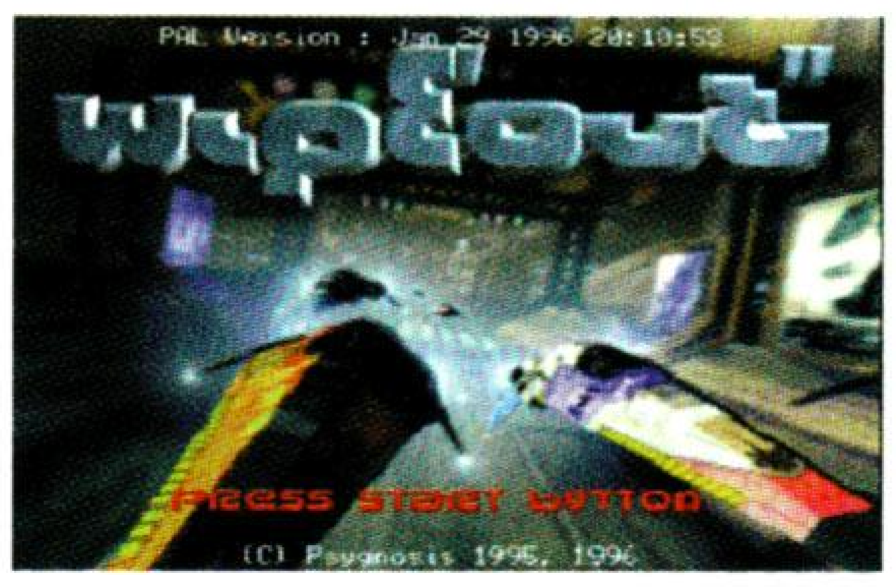


If you'd have conducted a survey of the most popular superconsoles before Christmas, it's pretty safe to say that PlayStation would have come out on top. With the obvious lack of two of Sega's "Big Three" and not much else kicking about for the Saturn at the time, most people plumped for the obvious Sony, choice.

Of course the popularity of the PlayStation was given a welcome boost by the arrival of a certain racing title from Psygnosis, which sold a copy for every PlayStation sold in the week of its release. Naturally, the game in question is WipeOut. And it's coming to a Saturn near you soon...







When the impending arrival of WipeOut was first leaked to the press three months ago, no-one actually believed that the rumour would actually become a reality. In fact no-one actually believed that the Saturn was *capable* of reproducing a game of such sheen and high quality. But little more than three months on, an approximately 70% complete version of the game was unveiled to **MAXIMUM** staff.

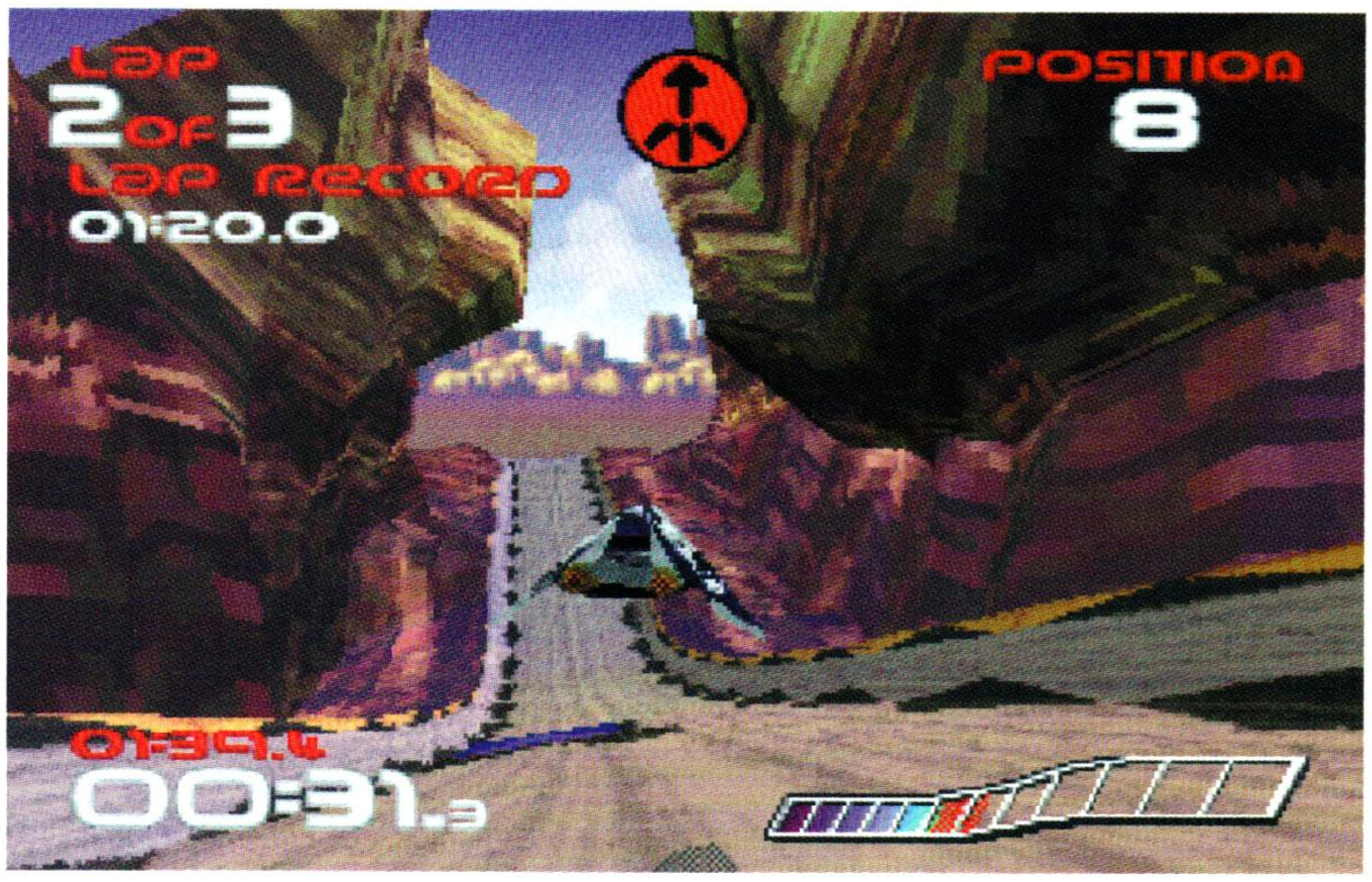
And, contrary to most critic's beliefs, the version shown to us is actually looking very close indeed to its PlayStation counterpart. All of the original gameplay has been included in this version, and all of the tracks (even the secret bonus track) are reproduced as they were originally intended. In fact, the only noticeable omission at this stage is the abundance of PlayStation ads and logos which adorned almost every track. They've been replaced by an abundance of Krazy Ivan logos instead. Now make of that what you will...

The release of WipeOut, apart from making PlayStation owners feel slightly green about the gills, naturally has wider repercussions than simply a release of a new game on a system. It goes much wider than that. After all, just six months ago at the PlayStation launch, it would have seemed inconceivable that the flagship UK launch game would appear on Sega's rival machine - particularly as Psygnosis is a division of Sony. And it seemed even less likely that in this event, they'd actually make a good job of it, bearing in mind the conversion work on the Saturn version of Toh Shin Den (the other PlayStation "exclusive") was pretty poor. But the recent deal with Sega – who will release the game in March – suggests that Psygnosis are returning to their previous status as a multi-format publisher with a vengeance. And, considering that this leaves Namco as Sony's sole "trophy" company, newcomers to the console scene may find choosing between super-consoles an even more confusing task than ever before. Making matters even more confusing is the fact that a lot of PlayStation hits are coming to Saturn with different names - hence Actua Soccer being Euro '96 on the Sega machine. Bizarre stuff.

FRONT-ENDERY
When first booting up WipeOut it's clear that the programmers have done absolutely everything to make this indistinguishable from the Sony version. Like the front end.

Top PlayStation developers agree to publish on Saturn by March!

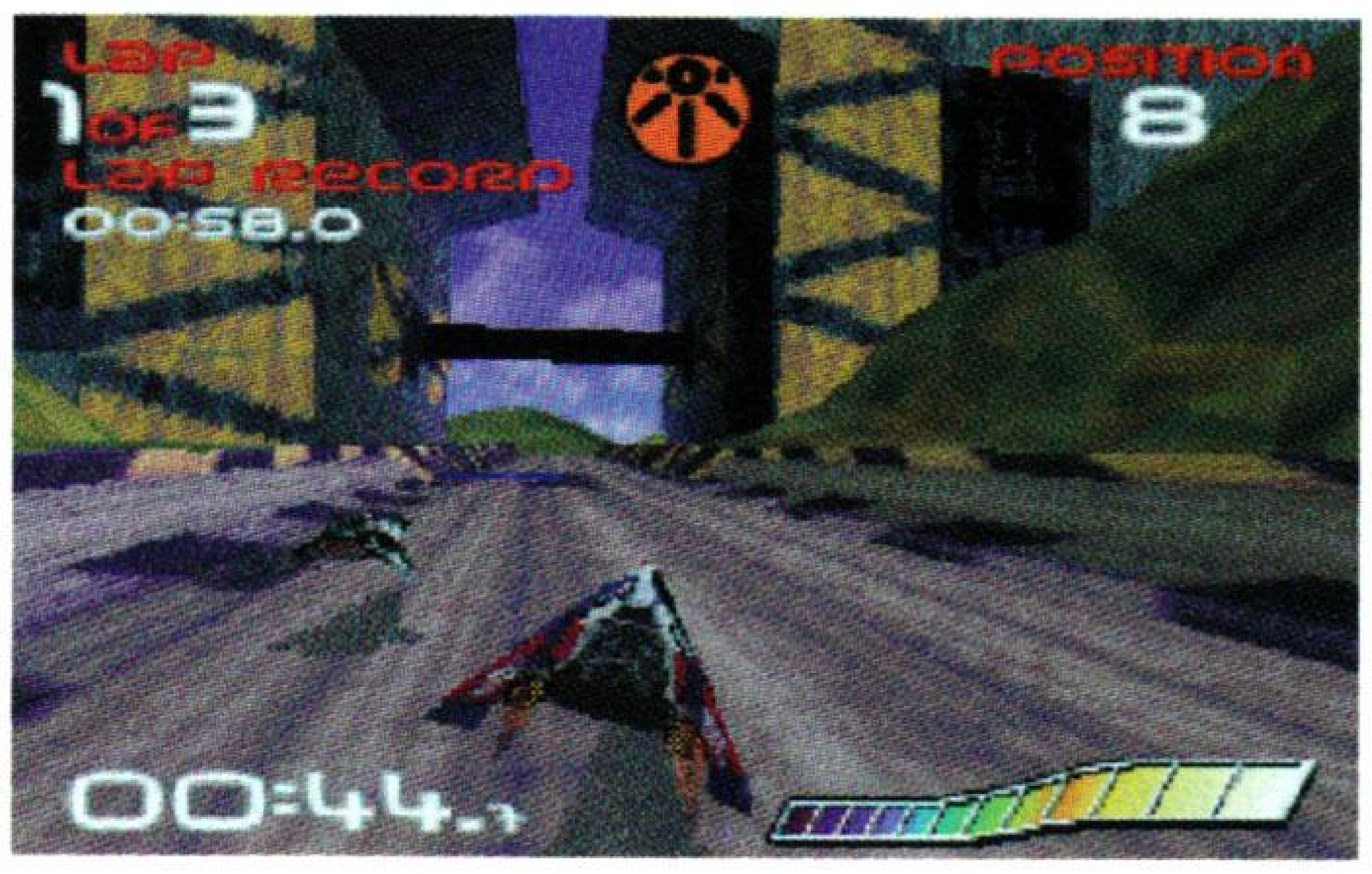
A full-speed PAL conversion is promised for the March launch!

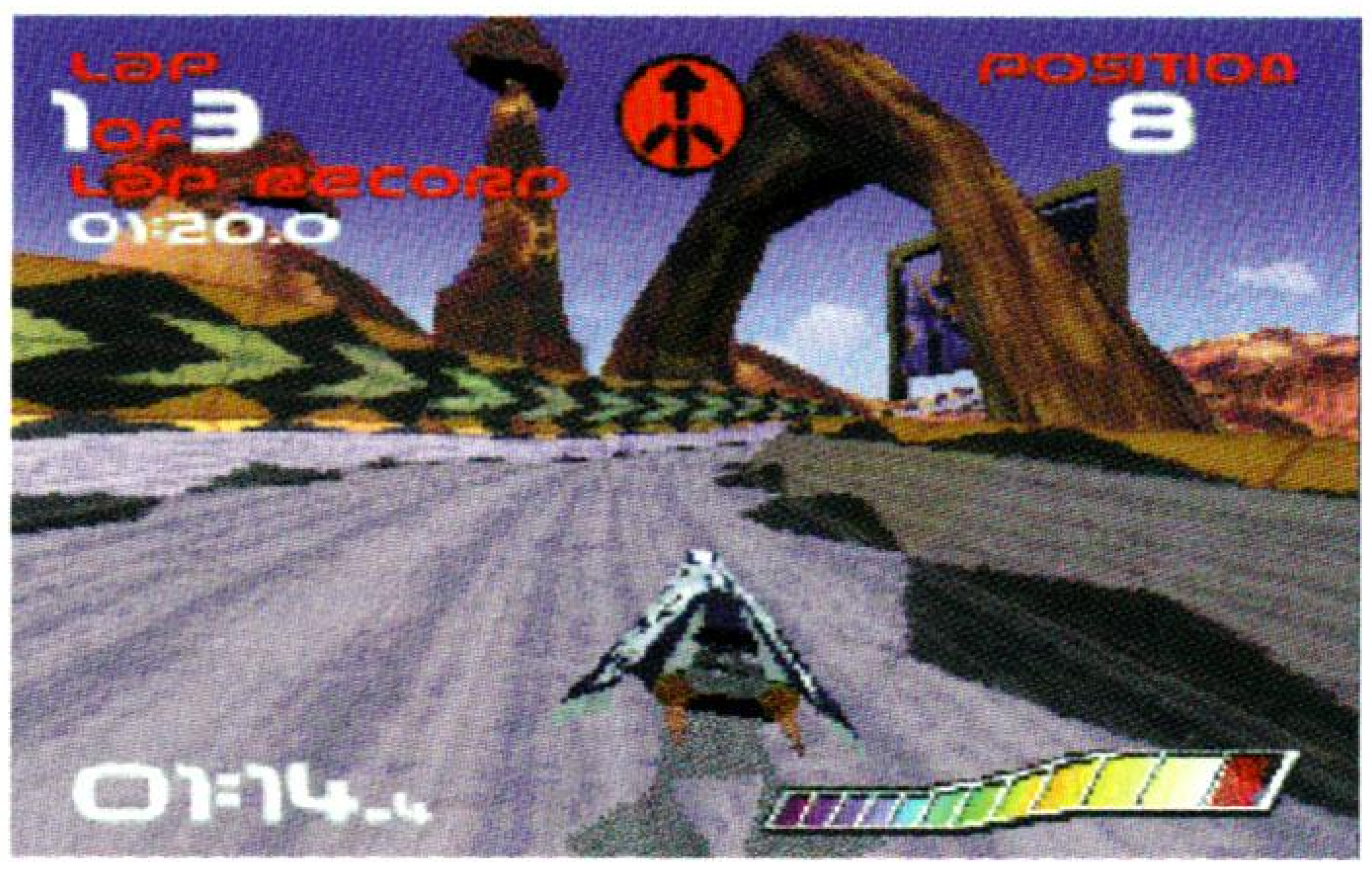


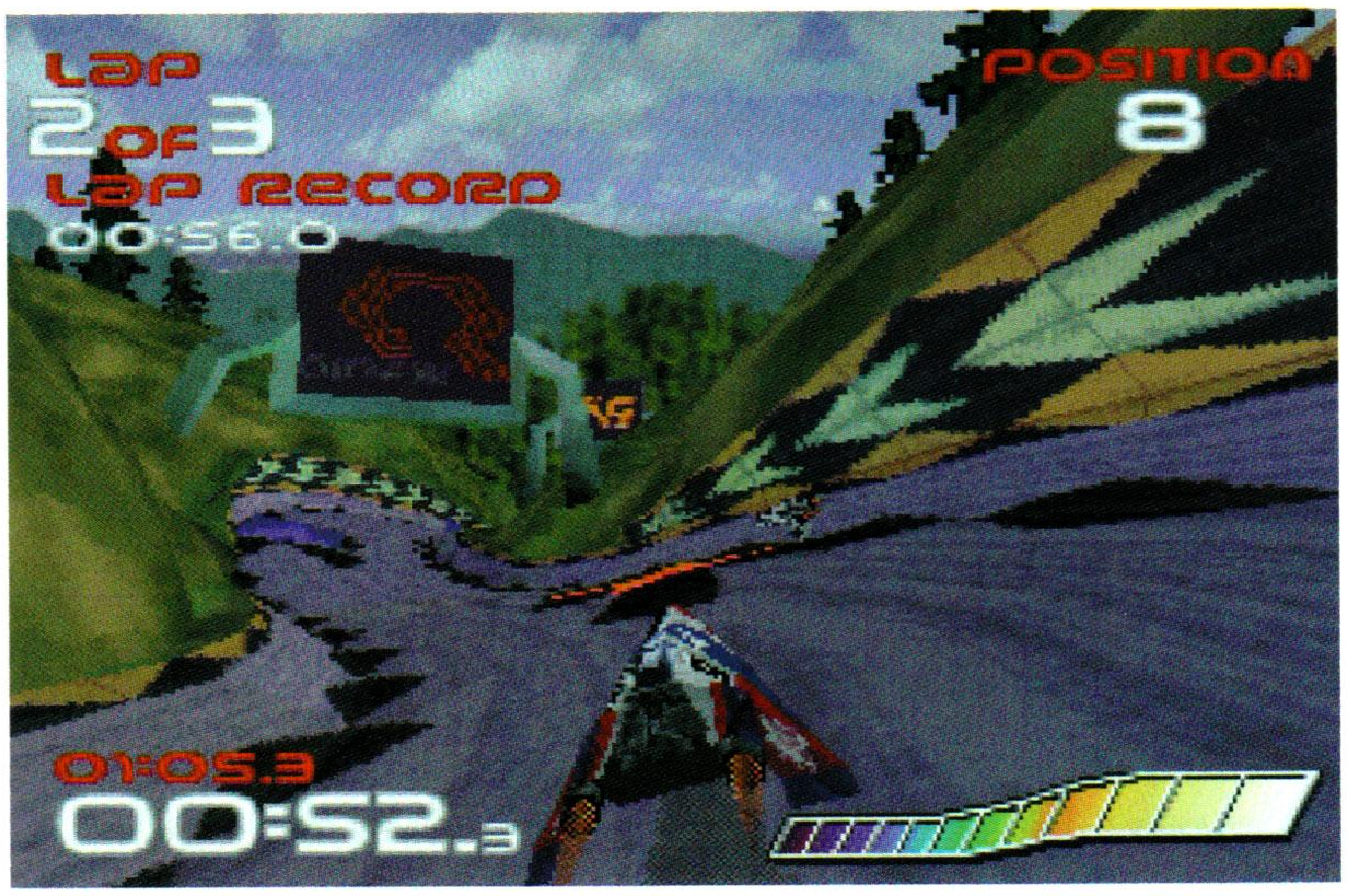
RESOLUTION QUESTIONS
WipeOut on Saturn looks near enough identical to the PlayStation original - from these shots the only difference you can see is a slight reduction in the overall resolution of the game - nothing major.

SELECT YOUR PILOT
KEL SOLAAR
ARIAL TETSUO
SELECT
BACK

So how does WipeOut look on Saturn - can the graphical showcase that was the PlayStation version be converted successfully to a machine that lacks some of the Sony hardware's graphical rick? When we were shown the pre-production version of WipeOut, we were alerted to a couple of subtle changes noticeable in the game. Most importantly, the game's graphics do not seem quite a smooth as its PlayStation counterpart, particularly on the tracks. Plus, some of the translucent effects on the shields and weapons look a little more rough around the edges. But do not fear, the changes are barely noticeable unless you ran the of games side-by-side, and even the 70% complete version is looking way more impressive



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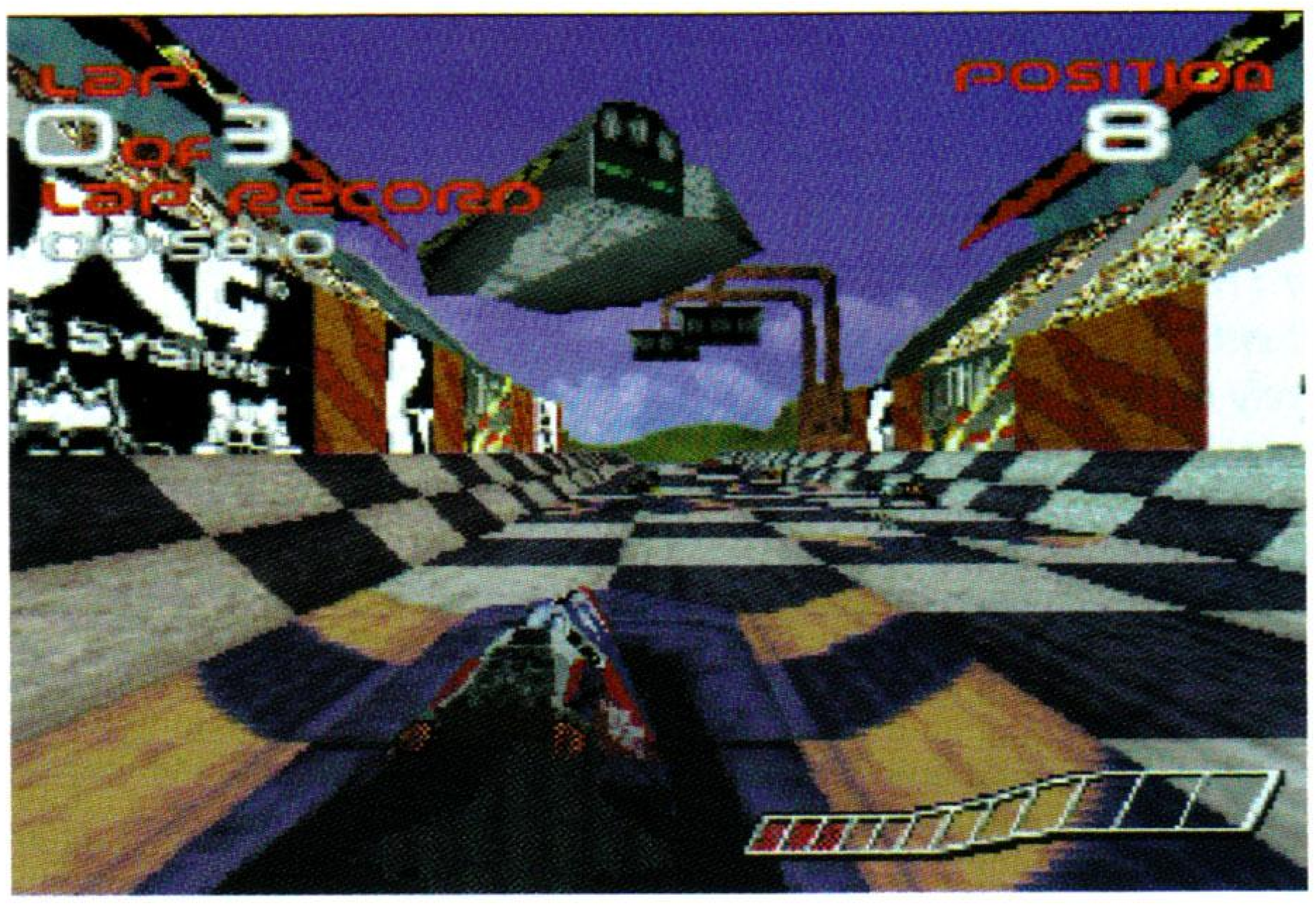
than anyone ever dreamed. More impressive though is the promise that the final game will hopefully run every bit as fast as the original (a slight jerkiness is evident in the conversion as it stands - we'll have the finished version in time for the next edition of **MAXIMUM**). So at the moment, it seems that PlayStation owners can rest easy - their version remains the best available.

iNaturally, the most eagerly awaited feature in the game is the link-up facility. We're pretty sad to announce that this feature will not make it into the final Saturn version. Apparently the cable remains something of a mystery to the conversionsmiths and due to the fact that Psygnosis want the game out by March (so sales register this financial year) this feature has had to be shelved. However, **MAXIMUM** can reveal that by the time you read this, the cable will be available in Japan (along with the first game to use it, the odd Gebockers).

The finished version of Saturn WipeOut will definitely be in the shops sometime in March, and with CD game turnaround time as little as three weeks, Psygnosis will be working on bringing you the very best conversion they can possibly create. And with the arrival of even more Psygnosis games to be announced in the very near future, it seems Saturn owners have never had it better! Now let's see if Psygnosis' awesome F1 game will be converted...

As with the PC version of WipeOut, certain music tracks in the game had to be omitted due to copyright infringements. The Chemical Brothers, Orbital and Leftfield are all Sony owned acts, and therefore are prohibited from appearing on machines other than the PlayStation. However, Psygnosis' in-house music team Cold Storage have done the honours for the three missing acts and have created three all-new tracks for the Saturn version. In fact, some would even argue that they're better than the originals!

In related news, Psygnosis have also announced their plans for a Saturn version of Destruction Derby, to be released some time in late spring. This renowned title held the record for the fastest selling CD game ever until it was recently superseded by Sega Rally, and is another title that will no doubt make the Saturn an even more attractive proposition for prospective buyers. Again, Psygnosis are confident of bringing a top class conversion to the machine, and hopefully **MAXIMUM** will be able to bring you early pictures of this in the next issue. And on a more sublime note, they're also working on conversions of Discworld and 3D Lemmings. What next? Assault Rigs and Adidas Power Soccer perhaps?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LAP
1 OF 3
LAP RECORD
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THE SPEED ISSUE
The speed of WipeOut remains pretty swift, but the frame rate has suffered ever-so-slightly.

Link-up options WON'T make it into the final conversion!

LAP
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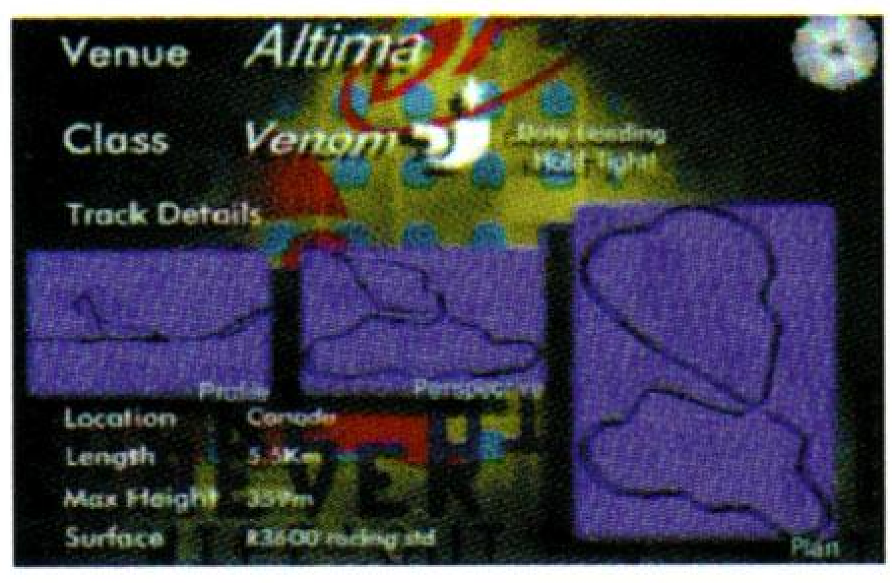
Venue Altima
Class Venom
Track Details
Location Canada
Length 5.5Km
Max Height 359m
Surface

LAP
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LAP RECORD
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POSITION
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LAP
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LAP RECORD
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POSITION
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LAP RECORD
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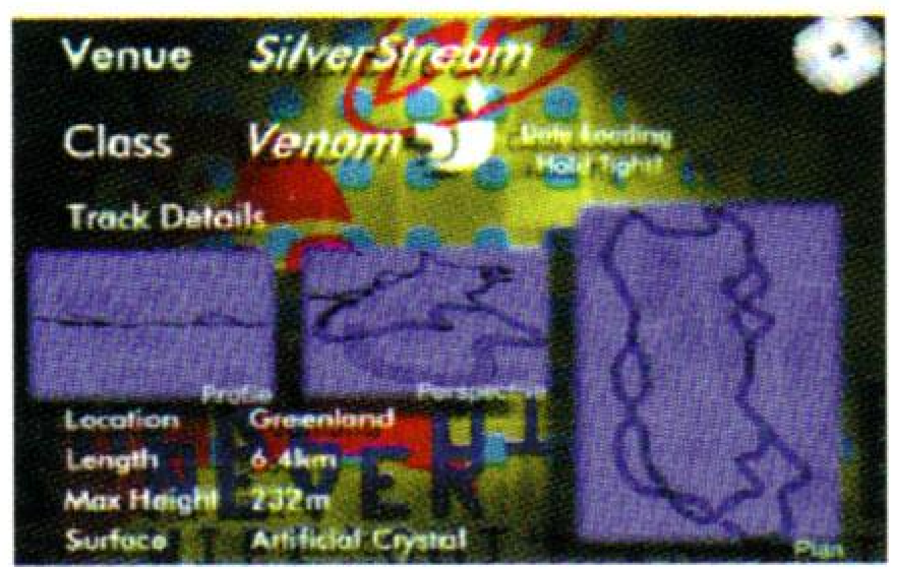
SHIELD EFFECTS
The PlayStation's hardware enables some fancy transparency effects to be included in WipeOut and at the time of writing this is causing some problems in the Saturn conversion.


Venue SilverStream
Class Venom
Track Details
Location Greenland
Length 6.4km
Max Height 232m
Surface Artificial Crystal

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LAP RECORD
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POSITION
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SUPER SILVERSTREAM
The real test of WipeOut's closeness to the PlayStation original is in the SilverStream course, which features the most complex textures and course twists in the game. The Saturn does fine here.

MAXIMUM RESPONSE

M
EMAP

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE READERS
MISSIVES VIA MAIL
You write, we reply - as is the usual custom

MAXIMUM LETTERS

Intelligent debate with our valued readership

After three issues, MAXIMUM finally lives up to the reader interaction promises made all the way back in issue #1! The following letters are the cream of the crop received during the last five months and sum exactly what kind of correspondence we want here at MAXIMUM - concise, lucid points on the world of videogames. Write to: MAXIMUM Response, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Alternatively, you could try an email in the general direction of Richard.Leadbetter@phantas.lightning.co.uk. A more permanent MAXIMUM email address will be forthcoming over the next couple of months...

Dear **MAXIMUM**
Great first issue - keep it going. My question is: with the huge potential of these next generation consoles, has anyone thought of a 3D Mortal Kombat style game? I'm a huge beat 'em up fan and the thought of beating up a digitised 3D character and then bestowing some suitably grizzly end makes my toes tingle. Also, what about three or more fighters in the ring at the same time?

My other thought was a Streets of Rage style game with your favourite Street Fighter or Mortal Kombatist? I hope you can look into my questions...
D Moody, Edinburgh

__MAXIMUM__ was hoping for a four-player link-up for Virtua Fighter 3... although the control method to deal with attacks from all directions would doubtless be a nightmare to design, yet alone implement. Any road up, we're quite happy to go on record to say that the entire team is not at all impressed with Mortal Kombat, its myriad sequels, conversions or clones.

MAXIMUM -
Please could you list Devil Kazuya's moves as we in Leicester have a Version B Tekken 2 with over 20 characters to choose from!
Steffan Leeming, Leicester
PS: Your mag is topper and although I'd rather not pay £3.50 it is just about worth it. But make sure the price doesn't increase!

All we're going to say on this particular issue is: anybody in the entire universe who either likes Tekken 2 or owns a PlayStation MUST purchase next month's __MAXIMUM__.

Dear **MAXIMUM**
Killer Instinct 2 is now available in one of London's popular arcades in Oxford Street (he's referring to Play to Win - **MAXIMUM**). As a KI1 fan I was anxiously awaiting the debut after reading the rave reviews in a number of magazines.

But after sampling the game the feeling from the punters is rather mixed. There is no question that it is an impressive piece of software. The SGI rendered intros for all the characters are breathtaking in 3D... rivalling anything I have seen.

There are two serious problems, however. The whole gameplay and the rendering of the characters themselves - the players don't look as good in the actual game as they do in KI1 and they have been reduced in size too! Orchid, the darling of all the characters has been spoiled and she looks awful in the game. The combo system is more complicated and having to relearn the game again... many will shy away from that. It is very naughty for Rare to change the rules of the game as experts with Orchid will now be beginners in the new game. The debut as far as I have seen was not in any way as spectacular as KI1.

Rare has spent too much time on the SGI intros and backdrops - brilliant as they are - but this has taken its toll on the characters. Why have they been reduced in size? The original feel of "Power Play" in the game has been lost. The characters look like something from a SNES machine.
Lee Davis, Swansea

You know we said we didn't like Mortal Kombat? Well, we aren't really that keen on Killer Instinct either. The combo system seems to rely too much on sequential button presses rather than true skill and digitised/rendered characters in general seem to lack a certain something... As for your comments on KI2, we're glad to see Rare change the combo system and the gameplay mechanics. Your last point is well made, though.

Dear **MAXIMUM**
Your magazine has to be one of the most impressive games publications I've ever read. As an older gamesplayer your magazine is refreshing in that it's the one I can actually use for tips on gameplay and cheats on the latest games. And as for the reviews - you guys are spot on, you must play them until they break.

Now I don't want this letter to sound like a geeky console mag letter that will get filed in the bin but I hope you can answer some questions. I recently visited my local arcade and was chuffed to see the new Mortal Kombat game (Extreme MK3), and bloody hell - it kicks posterior! It makes normal MK3 look like it's asleep. I recently purchased MK3 for my PSX and it's an astounding conversion. But can you tell me if you know of any plans to convert Extreme MK3 either as a data disc or as a complete game?

If you could do an Extended Play on Extreme MK3, that would be excellent as the amount of hidden moves and features is bewildering. I hope you can help and good luck with the magazine.
Dave, Merseyside.

Extreme Mortal Kombat 3 is due for both N64 and Sega Saturn, and we daresay that it'll turn up on PlayStation sooner or later. Sorry, but we have no plans for any Extreme MK3 Extended Plays at this time, although we may review that decision when the home versions appear later on this year.

Dear **MAXIMUM**
Congratulations on producing a damn fine magazine. Previously, Edge was my favourite, but unfortunately they fell short when it comes to in-depth reviews/previews. Which happens to be the area in which you excel. You've also managed to keep the mature attitude that us older gamers respect so much. Well done. I have some questions for you:

1. I recently saw Virtua Fighter 2 on TV. Although the graphics were stunning, the movement was nowhere near the same quality. Was this an unfinished version or the standard it will be when it's finally released?

2. I've read reports of a Sega Saturn 2 which has much improved specs. Would this be an add-on or a separate machine? The latter would mean that Saturn owners have wasted £300. Any info would be welcome.

3. It is possible to have demo CDs with **MAXIMUM**? I'm sure people would pay more for the luxury of "seeing" games move.

Keep up the good work with the Extended Plays!
Matthew Crosby, Falmouth, Cornwall.

Addressing your questions in turn: there's nothing wrong with the movement in any of the demos of VF2 Sega released or in the final game - it's excellent all round. Reports of a Saturn 2 are a bit far-fetched at the moment. Keep your eyes on M2 though - there's a lot of movement between Sega and Matsushita that's stoking the rumour engine. As for demo CDs - no way. As for the Daytona problem you also mentioned in your letter, we had no problem at all getting it to work...

Dear Sir/Madam
Congratulations on making **MAXIMUM** the one and only excellent next generation magazine. Out of the six or so friends and colleagues that I recommended the magazine to, none have yet complained a single bit - which was definitely not the case for their previous choice of reading.

Alas, there is one minor quibble and it is not a recurring one. In issue #3, page 112 **MAXIMUM** News coverage of Street Fighter Zero for PlayStation, in the fourth paragraph of the main body text you quote "- but we can exclusively reveal them on this page." referring to the different methods of selecting Akuma, Dan and M Bison. Please could you let me know if that was a mistake as I cannot seem to find the cheats on or near that page.

I can assure you that I will soon be subscribing to your magazine. Best of luck for the future.
Zakir Maniar, Forest Gate, London.

Oh dear, we've been rumbled. Due to a lack of communication coupled with the usual impossible deadlines, a mistake was made. The codes you mention should be found in this month's Extended Play. Also, our news section should contain pictures of Street Fighter Zero 2... check it out.

NEXT MONTH
The floodgates are open - we want plenty more mail in time for next month's edition of **MAXIMUM.** We're also opening up a new section imaginatively entitled **MAXIMUM** Q+A, where (unsurprisingly), we'll be expertly fielding your many queries on the world of next generation gaming. Send those missives in now to the address at the top of the page and we'll do the rest.

A MASSIVE 23 PAGES OF INCISIVE CRITICISM ON THE LATEST RELEASES FOR ALL MAJOR "NEXT GENERATION" PLATFORMS

THE ESSENTIAL BUYER GUIDE REVIEWS

Welcome to the final section of ***MAXIMUM*** *- the reviews segment, where the team take a look at the month's major releases and provide the clearest indication possible as to whether the software in question is worth the money being charged for it in your local software shop.*

This month's reviews take the usual form of the post-Christmas dross shovelled out in the absence of any major titles. Thankfully, there is at least some pretty good software out there and it comes down to Capcom saving the day for both PlayStation and Saturn owners. Acclaim finally get around to releasing X-Men: Children of the Atom for Sega owners whilst Virgin have the rights to publish the superlative Street Fighter Alpha. It was something of an arduous task to decide which of the two should be awarded the coveted Game of the Month award, but in the end we decided on X-Men, which is pacier and flashier, albeit not quite as technically accomplished. Still, Street Fighter could still do it - next month, we review the Saturn version...

MAXIMUM RATINGS SYSTEM

★★★★★	*A truly outstanding release and an essential purchase for any one.*
★★★★☆	*A recommended title that's head and shoulders above the competition.*
★★★☆☆	*Reserved for solid, fairly entertaining games that are missing a certain something.*
★★☆☆☆	*A below-par videogame that could only possibly appeal to the near-mythic "fan of the genre".*
★☆☆☆☆	*Hideous, retarded software that should not blight your prized game collection under any circumstances.*

MAXIMUM RECOMMENDED

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA Sony PlayStation

The latest fighting game conversion from Capcom manages to be just about arcade-perfect - all of the moves, animation and graphics are in there and the gameplay is excellent. Shame about those Sony pads though...

BAKU BAKU ANIMAL Sega Saturn

The second official release from the labs of Sega's AM R&D department #3 is this superlative puzzle game - easily outclassing opposition from Data East and Compile.

REAL BOUT FATAL FURY SNK Neo Geo

Yet another SNK fighting game. Make that yet another quality SNK fighting game. In a nutshell, better than Shodown 3, but still not in King of Fighters territory.

CHRONOMASTER PC/CD -ROM

This sort of thing usually isn't up our collective alleys, but Chronomaster is definitely in a league of its own at the time of writing.

HERETIC PC/CD -ROM

The first Doom clone arrives in a newly repackaged cheapo format. If your budget doesn't stretch to Hexen, this is well worth a look...

SOFTWARE LINE-UP

Sega Saturn

X-MEN: CHILDREN OF THE ATOM	★★★★★
WING	★★★☆☆
ARMS	★★★★☆
BAKU BAKU ANIMAL	★★★☆☆
VIRTUAL GOLF	★★☆☆☆
WORLD CUP GOLF	★☆☆☆☆
JOHNNY BAZOOKATONE	★★★☆☆
CYBERIA	★★★☆☆
D	★★☆☆☆
TRUE PINBALL	★★★★☆
NFL FOOTBALL	★★★☆☆
FIFA '96	★★★☆☆

Sony PlayStation

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA	★★★★★
JOHNNY BAZOOKATONE	★☆☆☆☆
KRAZY IVAN	★★☆☆☆
TOTAL NBA '96	★★★☆☆
TRUE PINBALL	★★☆☆☆
MYST	★★☆☆☆
D	★★★☆☆
IN THE HUNT	★★☆☆☆
MICKEY'S WILD ADVENTURE	★★☆☆☆
NBA IN THE ZONE	★★★☆☆
ROAD RASH	★★☆☆☆

SNK Neo Geo

REAL BOUT FATAL FURY	★★★★☆

3DO

DOOM	★☆☆☆☆

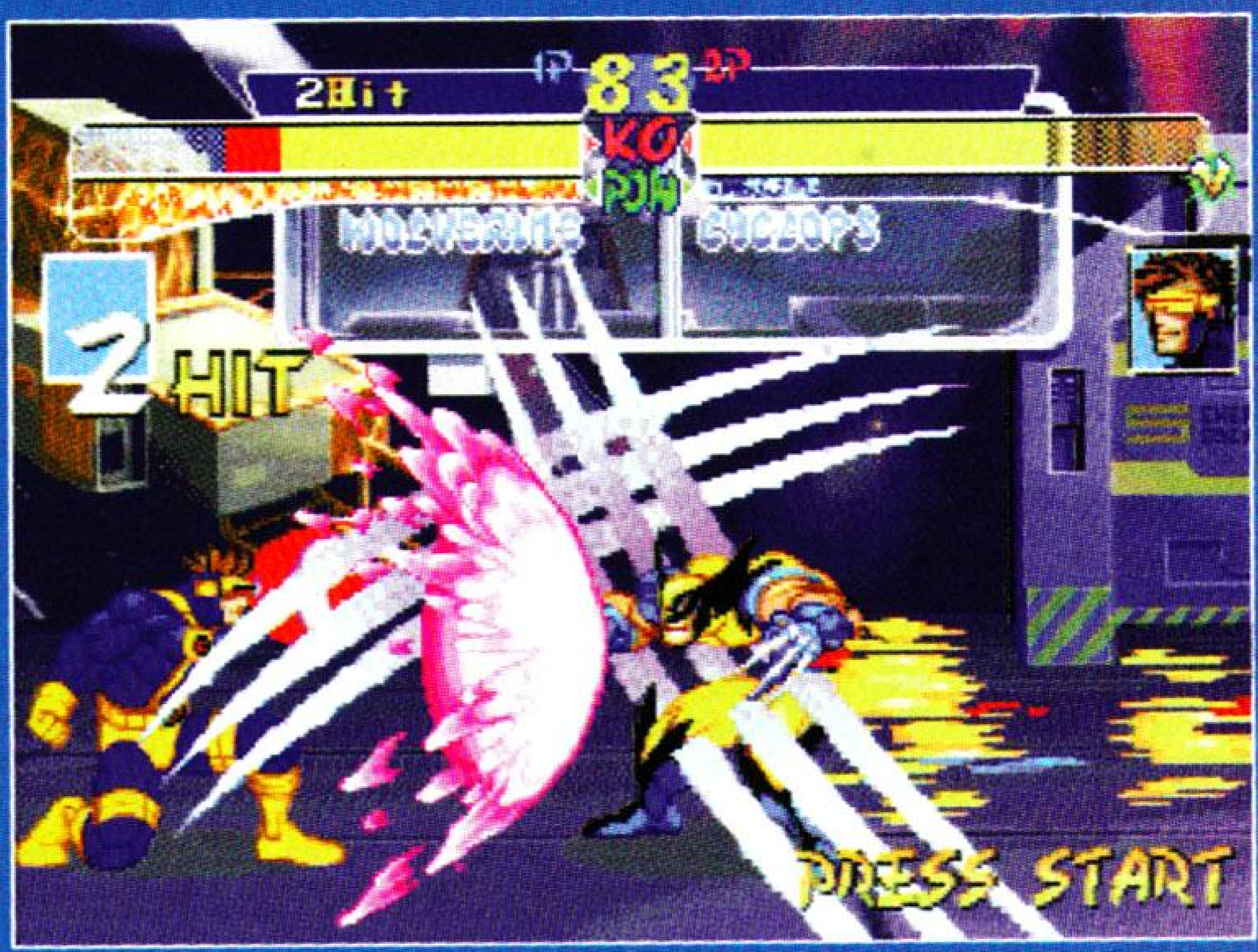
PC/CD-ROM

CHRONOMASTER	★★★★★
HERETIC	★★★★☆
THIS MEANS WAR!	★★★☆☆
EARTHWORM JIM	★★★★☆
GABRIEL KNIGHT: THE BEAST WITHIN	★★★★☆
CONQUEROR AD1086	★★★☆☆
THE GATE	★★★☆☆

MAXIMUM GAME OF THE MONTH

X-MEN: CHILDREN OF THE ATOM

A Capcom masterpiece, X-Men manages to provide an audio-visual overload combined with excellent gameplay. Here's a quick confession: we've actually been playing this far more than Virtua Fighter 2. What better recommendation can you have?



Just as we were expecting everything to go a bit quiet in the not-much-happening month of February, developers seem to have gone Saturn mad. There's well over ten releases to plough through, and among them are a couple of outstanding titles, most notably X-Men: Children of the Atom. Acclaim had initially decided to release this in July (to co-incide with their in-house PC version - B-I-G mistake) but thought better of it, so Saturn owners, for once, get a good deal on third party software. It has to be said that this makes a change - after all, on the PlayStation the situation is reversed with the Sony games are typically not that good, whilst third party titles are that much better.

Things are a bit quiet for Sega themselves at the moment - with their "Big Three" all out on the shelves, they're preparing for another top-quality assault on the market at around Easter time. in the meantime though, there's Baku Baku Animal to plug the gap - designed by none other than AM3. What next? A fighting game starring Sonic the Hedgehog...?

X-MEN: CHILDREN OF THE ATOM

Capcom bring their arcade smash into the home!

Played X-Men? Seen the ridiculous amounts of hits combination attacks can inflict? These are the highest recorded by Capcom in their official guide to the arcade version...

1. ***ICEMAN (80 hits)***
2. ***STORM (76 hits)***
3. ***WOLVERINE (38 hits)***
4. ***SILVER SAMURAI (30 hits)***
5. ***CYCLOPS (27 hits)***
6. ***SPIRAL (27 hits)***
7. ***SENTINEL (21 hits)***
8. ***PSYLOCKE (18 hits)***
9. ***OMEGA RED (18 hits)***
10. ***COLOSSUS (15 hits)***

INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY CAPCOM

There's been a certain amount of confusion regarding the UK release of X-Men. First, it was supposed to be out in time for Christmas. Then, Acclaim decided to hold the release back to co-incide it with the PC and PlayStation versions - due in July. Finally, they decided not to wait after all, and as a result, X-Men should be out in the shops by mid-February. Which, of course, can only mean good news for Saturn owners.

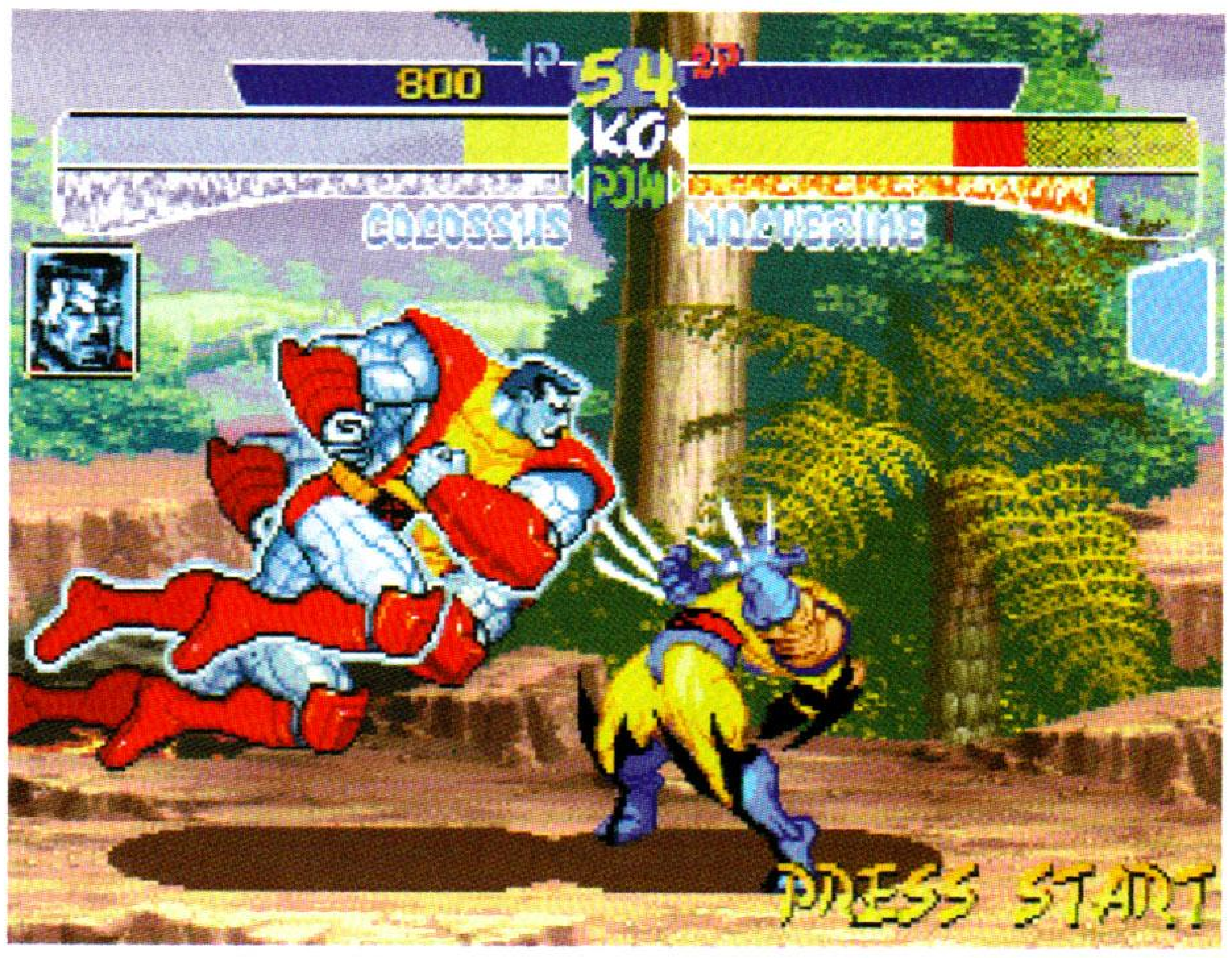
This isn't just because it means that there's another combat game available for the machine. Nope, it's more to do with the fact that Capcom's first Marvel coin-op is an absolutely awesome conversion from the arcade original, retaining both the superb graphics and excellent gameplay. It's also a sad fact that this is the only version of X-Men that will remain so close to the original, as Acclaim's in house programming team will be responsible for both the PlayStation and PC versions. Naturally, this doesn't necessarily mean that they will be inferior conversions, but if you want the closest conversion put together by a Capcom team, the Saturn is the only place you'll find it.

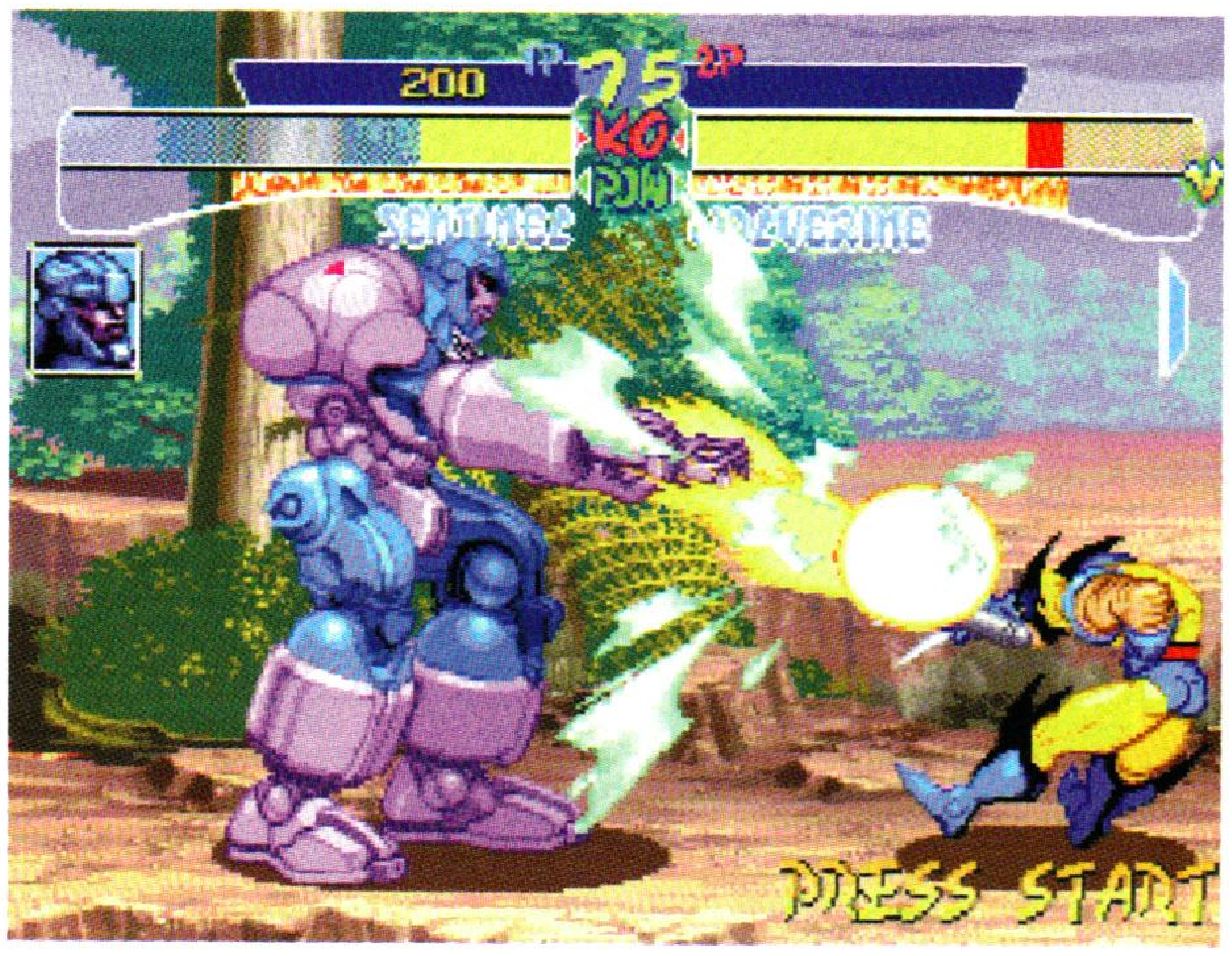
Plus, in addition to the inclusion of all the original features, Capcom have also created a few home-only modes too. As well as the usual two-player mode, there's a group battle mode where two players pick a team of warriors and fight until the last man is standing, and there's also a survival mode. In this mode just one round of a fight is played, then the contender moves on to the next fighter until he either beats all 13 or drops down dead. This obviously helps the game in terms of lastability and gives you more of a challenge when you're fed up of playing in standard mode.

Graphically, there's absolutely no way of faulting X-Men. it remains almost exactly the same as the original title and all of the sprites are a decent size. There's a couple of surprise characters to discover as well, most notably Akuma, who takes time off from Streetfighter to give mutant asses a good kicking. The other two are Juggernaut and Magneto, both of whom are absolutely deadly foes for any standard (?) X-Men mutant (see page 70 for some player-controllable Juggernaut action).

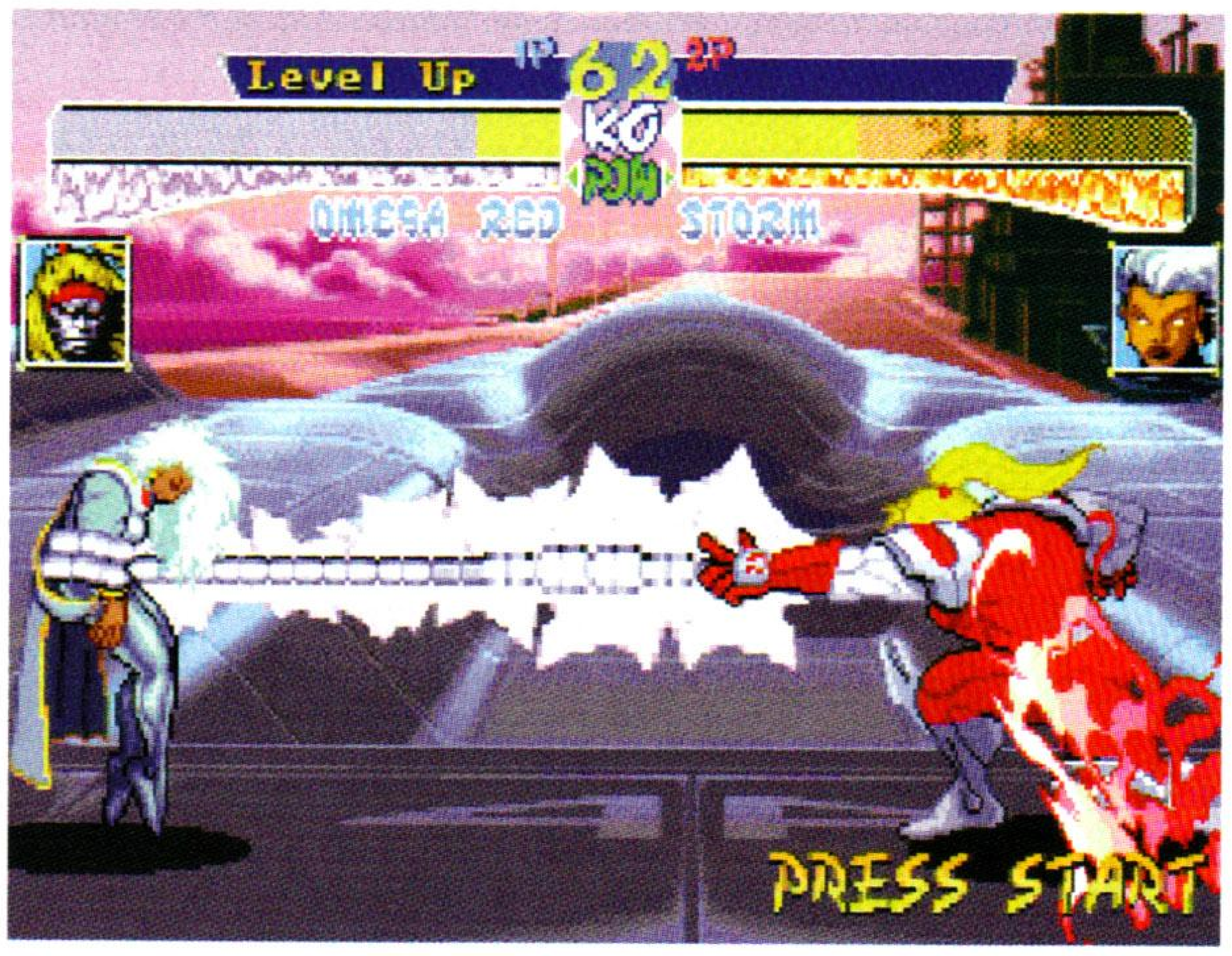
There's no doubt that any beat 'em up fan will find this an absolute joy to play - while it lacks the coolness of Virtua Fighter 2, it's more of a hark back to the Street Fighter style of gameplay (which of course Capcom were responsible for anyway) which is just fine by us. And of course, it's a game that's going to last you longer than a week - after all, how long do you think it will take to master Iceman's *80-hit* combination attack?

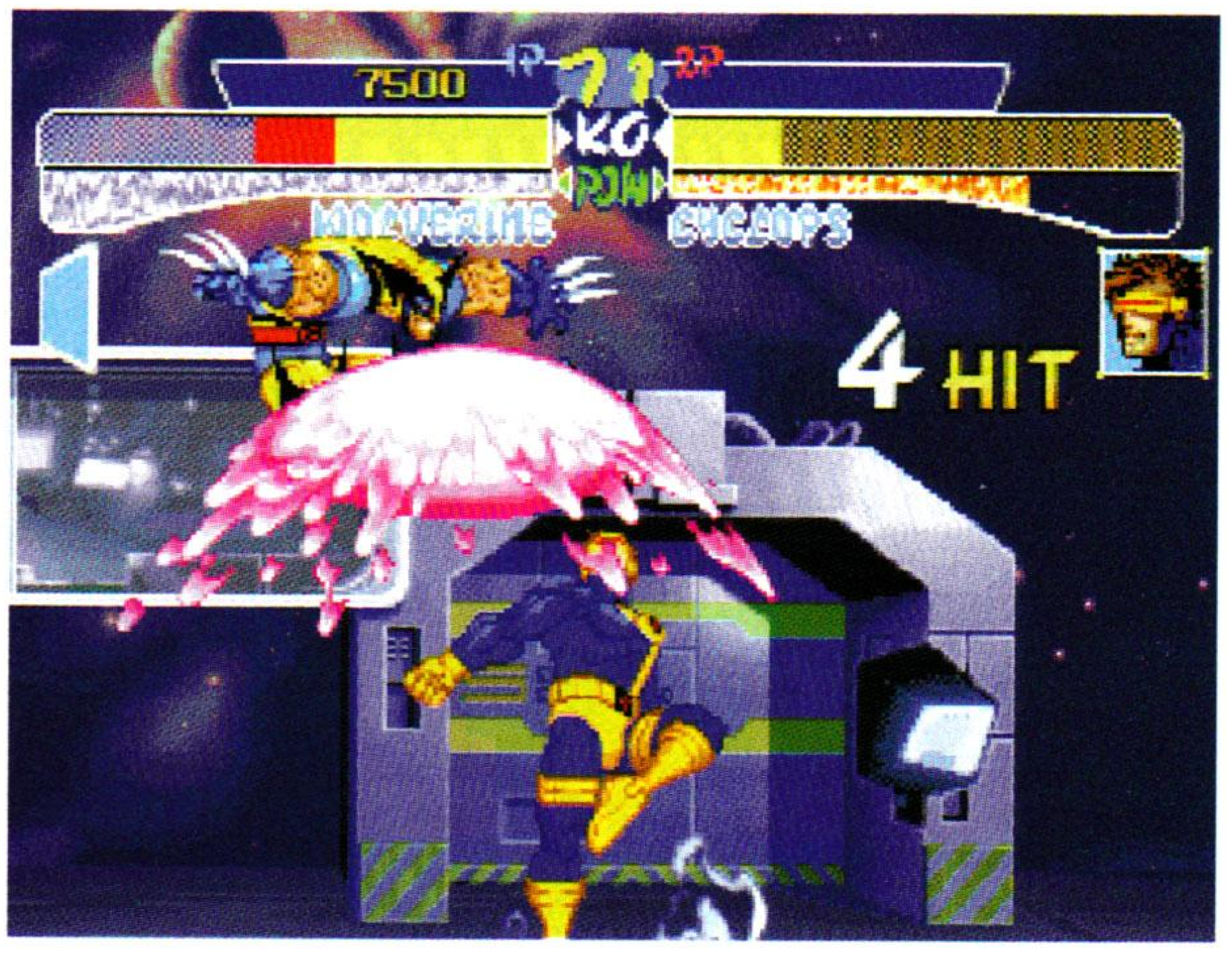
★★★★★

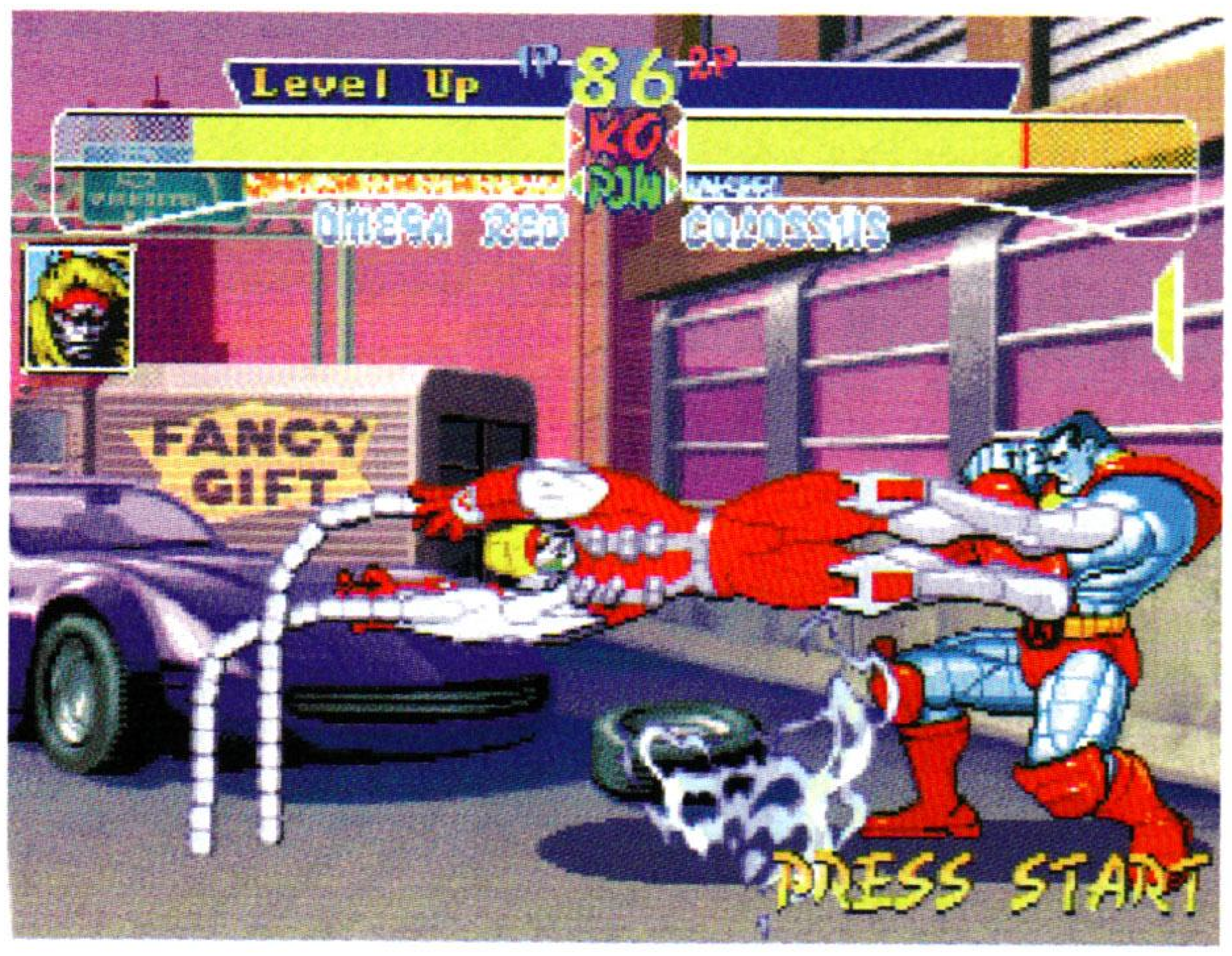




ARE YOUR POWERS STRONG ENOUGH TO SURVIVE THE MIGHT OF MAGNETO?

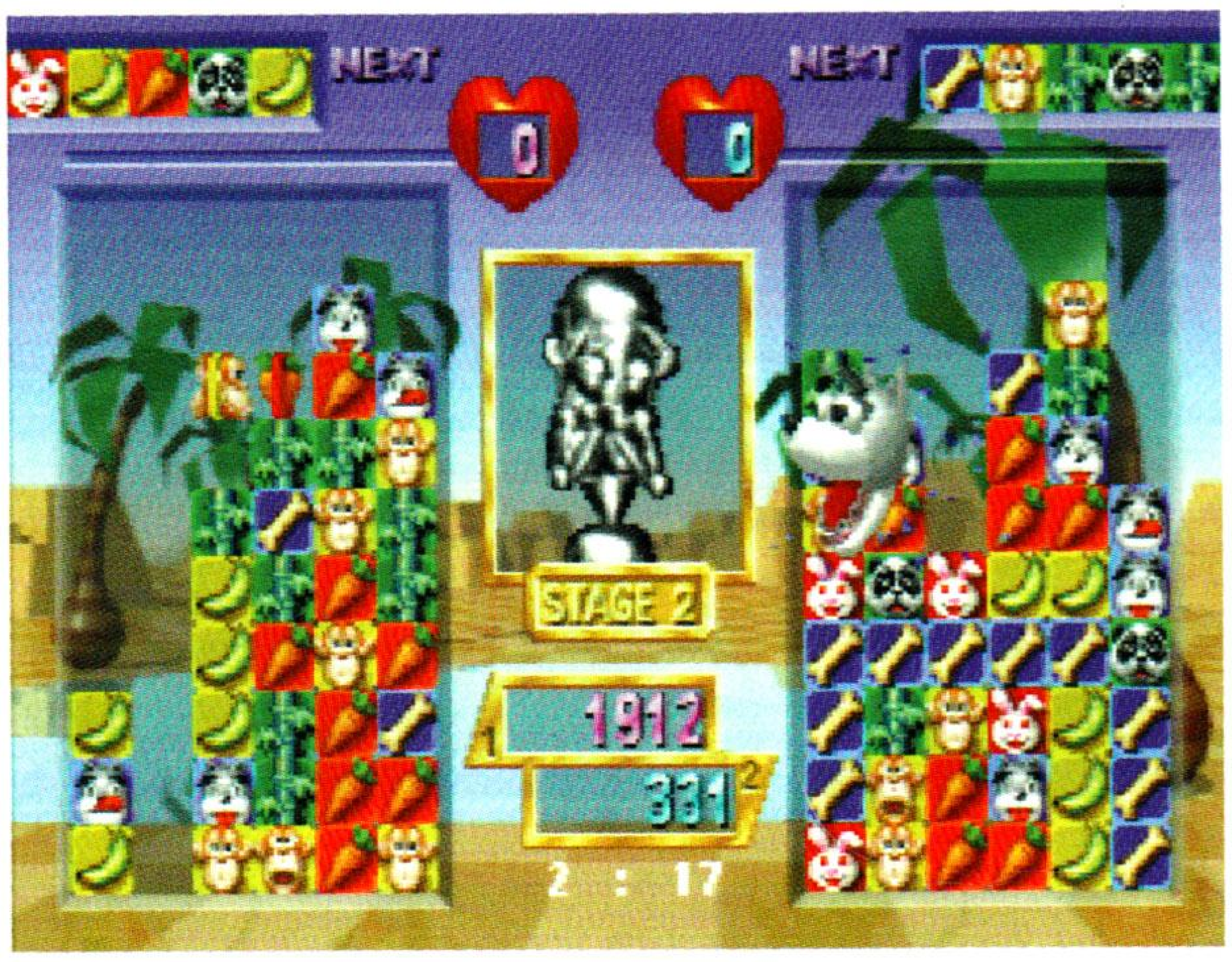






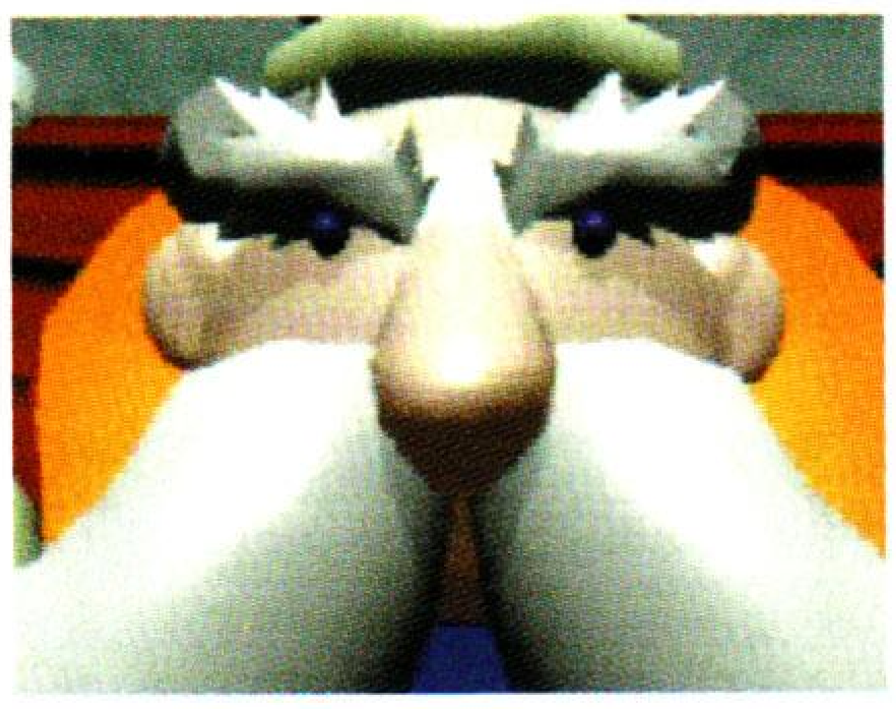
BAKU BAKU ANIMAL

AM3 drop racing games in favour of furry animals!

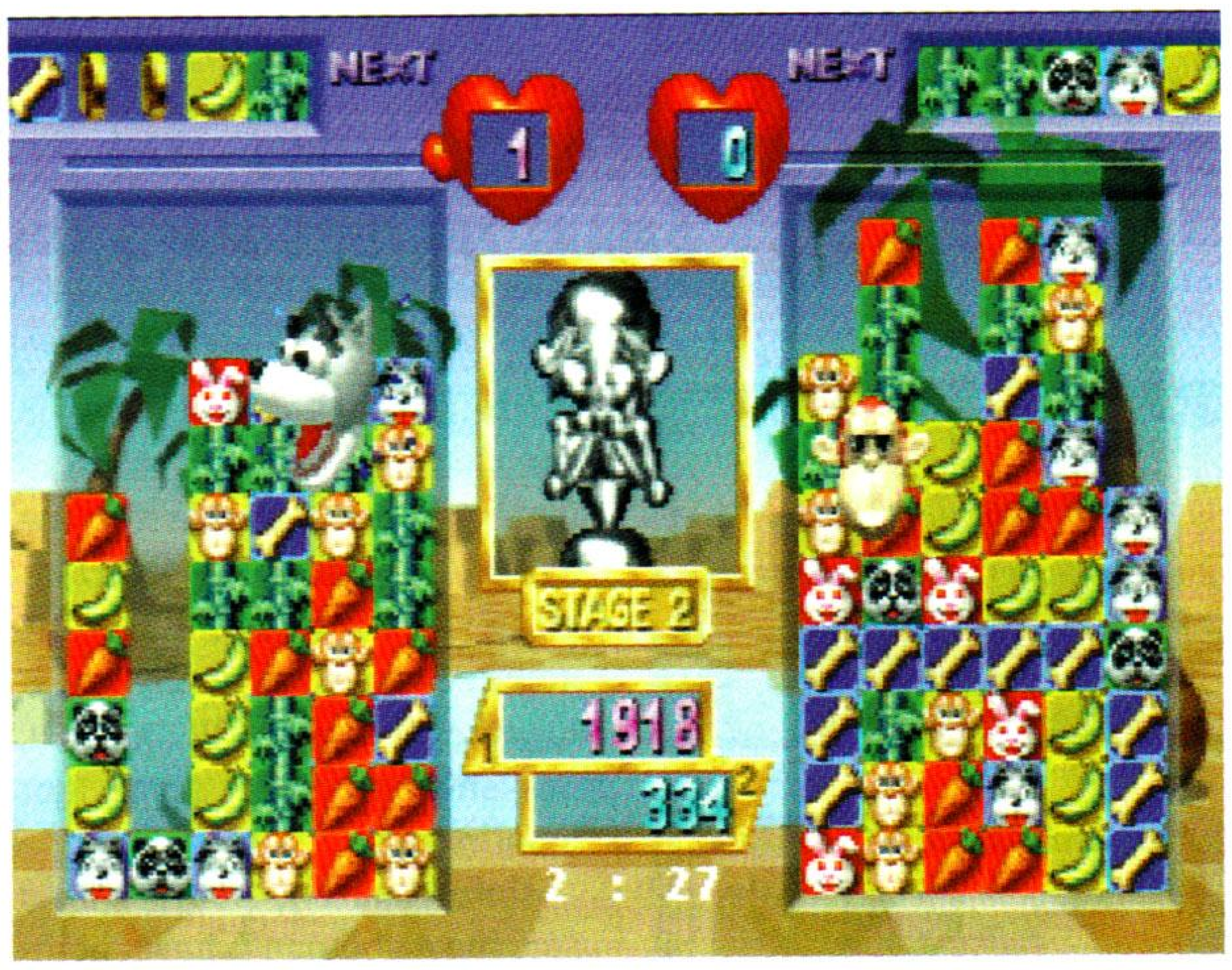


Import fans will probably have seen this title gracing the shelves of their local retailer over the last month, although despite being developed by none other than AM3, it's unlikely to appeal to those addicted to technical prowess and show-offery (and let's face it, these are always the types that you'll find down at the importers). You see, even though this is only AM3's second game for the Saturn, they've decided to hang up their racing helmets for a while, and instead, they've turned their hand to another popular genre of video gaming culture - the puzzle game. Difficult to believe this may be, but AM3 themselves have always said that they wanted to do a puzzler and we suspect that after the heavyweight work that was put into Rally, the team probably felt like doing something a little more light-hearted, and came up with this - no doubt when they had a spare hour or two.

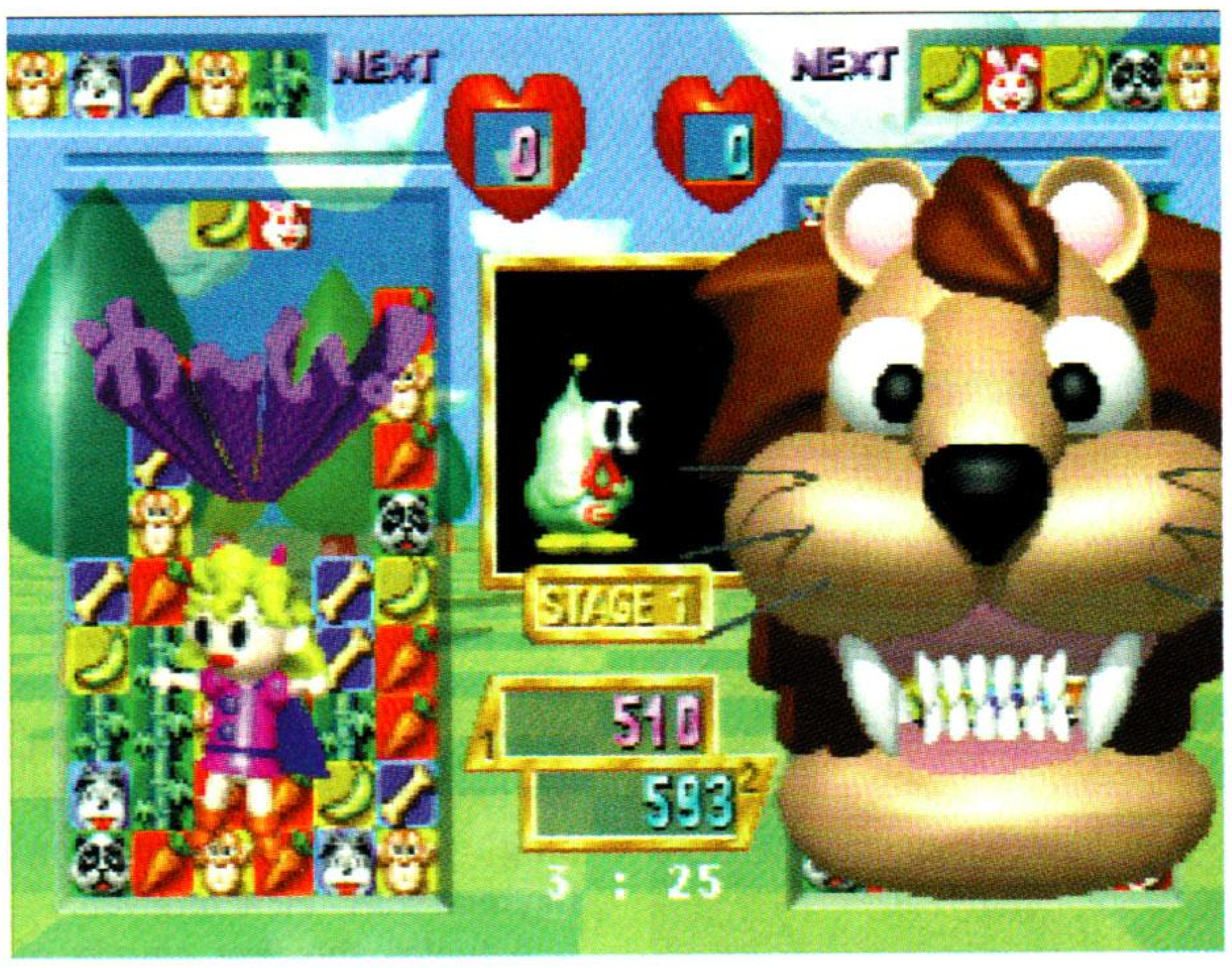
A FRENZY OF TOP PUZZLE ACTION! A WELCOME CHANGE TO THE USUAL FIGHTING DRIVEL!



Anyway, the result is a rather neat Tetris/Puyo Puyo clone, with a twist or two. The twists come in the form of various animals which are near starving, and need to be fed their chosen food of the day. Both animals and food are dropped on to the screen, and you'll have to match more than one block of food with its respective partner in order for them to disappear off the screen - the aim being to keep the rows of food and animals as close to the bottom of the screen as possible. Once the blocks get to the top, it's game over. Of course, this wouldn't be very interesting if there was no challenge involved, so the screen is split in half, and on the other side is one of seven computerised opponents to play against. Every time you clear a line of fruits they'll drop on to his playing area and vice versa. While this isn't' t exactly pushing the technical boundaries of the Saturn in any way whatsoever, the result is a surprisingly addictive and challenging game.



Naturally, the real entertainment will be gleaned from playing against another (real) person and although the large part of the game relies on the player's ability to set off chain reactions of animal eaterie, there's an element of chance involved too, so even non-experienced players will get into it very quickly.

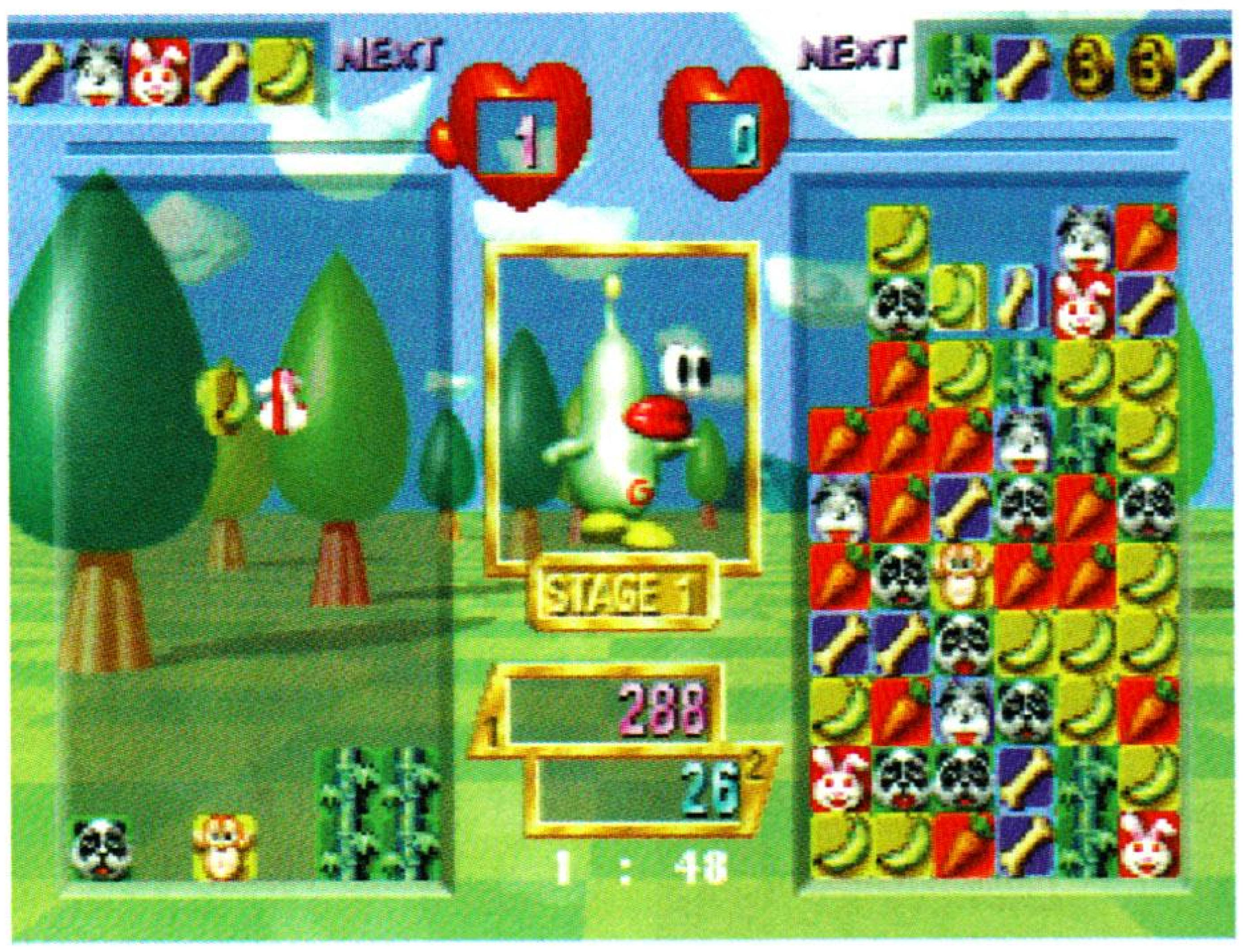


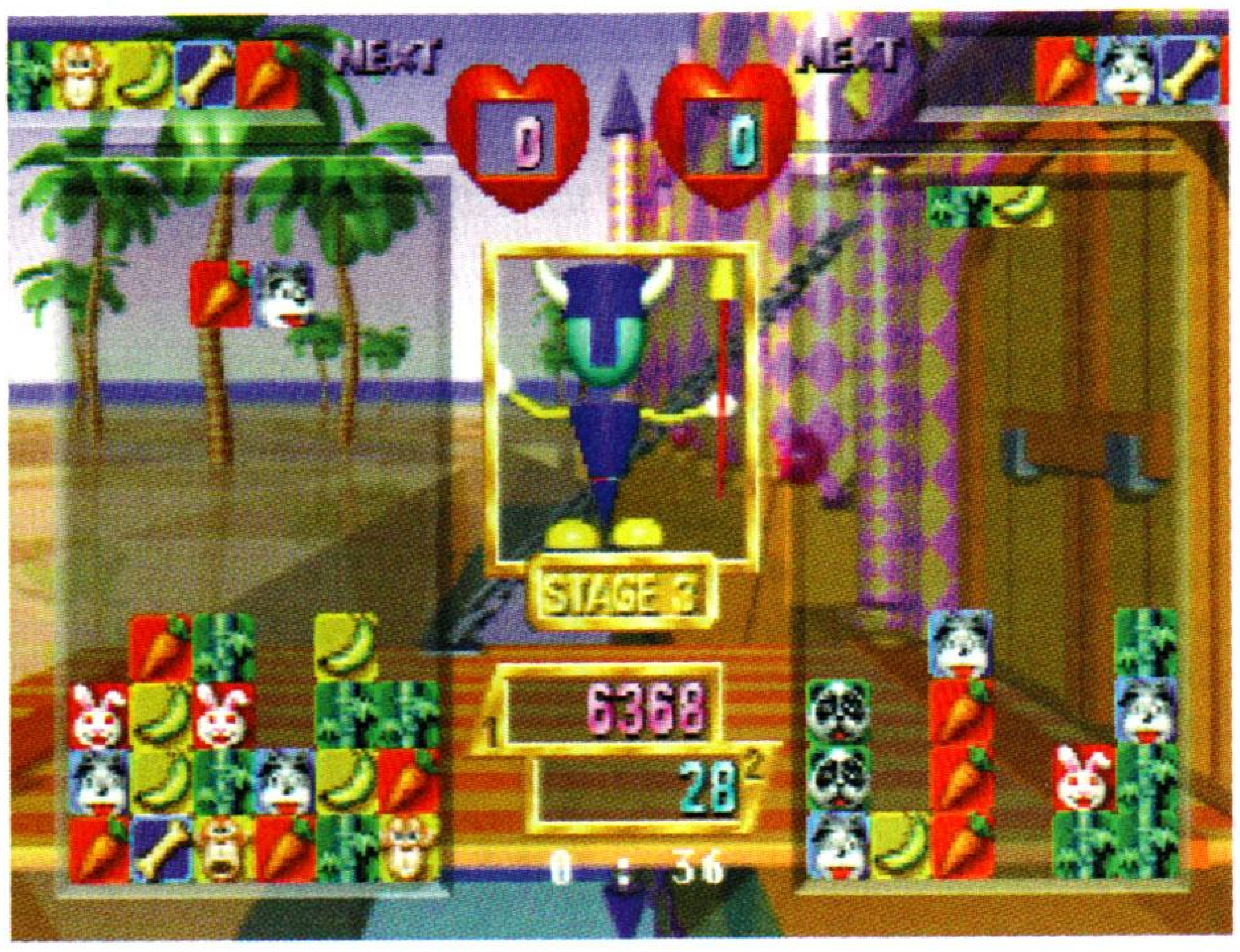
A PUZZLE FEST WITH CHOMPING TO BOOT!

While it's safe to say that no one is going to go crazy over this title (after all, there's been hundreds of games like this in the past) it does have a more light hearted and dare we say, novelty factor than titles such as this seen before. In fact, coupled with the ridiculously jolly tunes and silly sound effects, it really does provide a nice break from the more "throw your weight around" titles currently doing the rounds on the Saturn.

At the end of the day, anyone expecting an AM style festival of 3D trickery and clever gameplay will be sorely disappointed, but if you're after a bit of fun (which is essentially what games are all about anyway) and some desperately addictive gameplay, Baku Baku Animal is well worth a look. Most definitely the best "next generation" puzzle game we've seen to date.

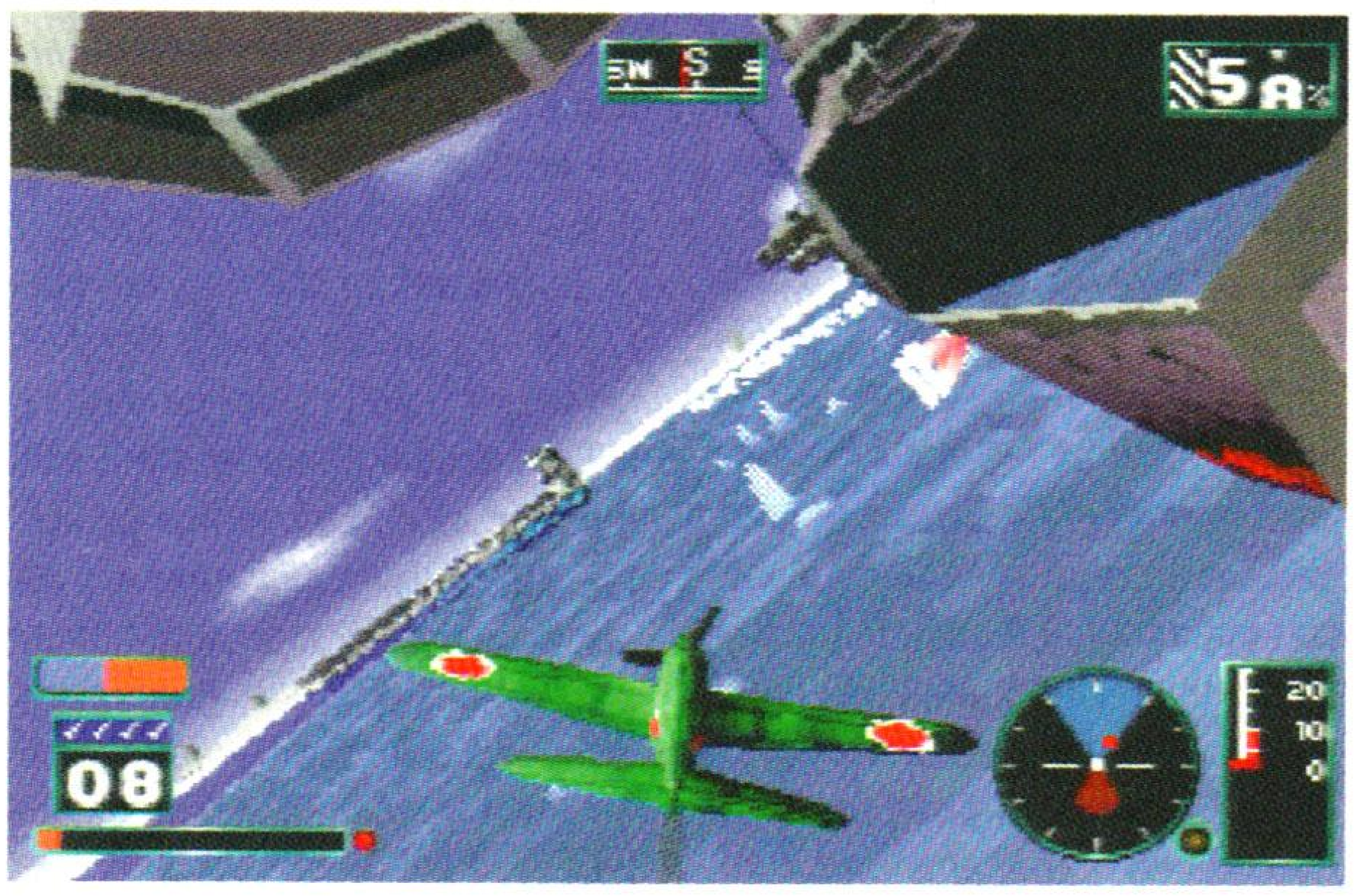
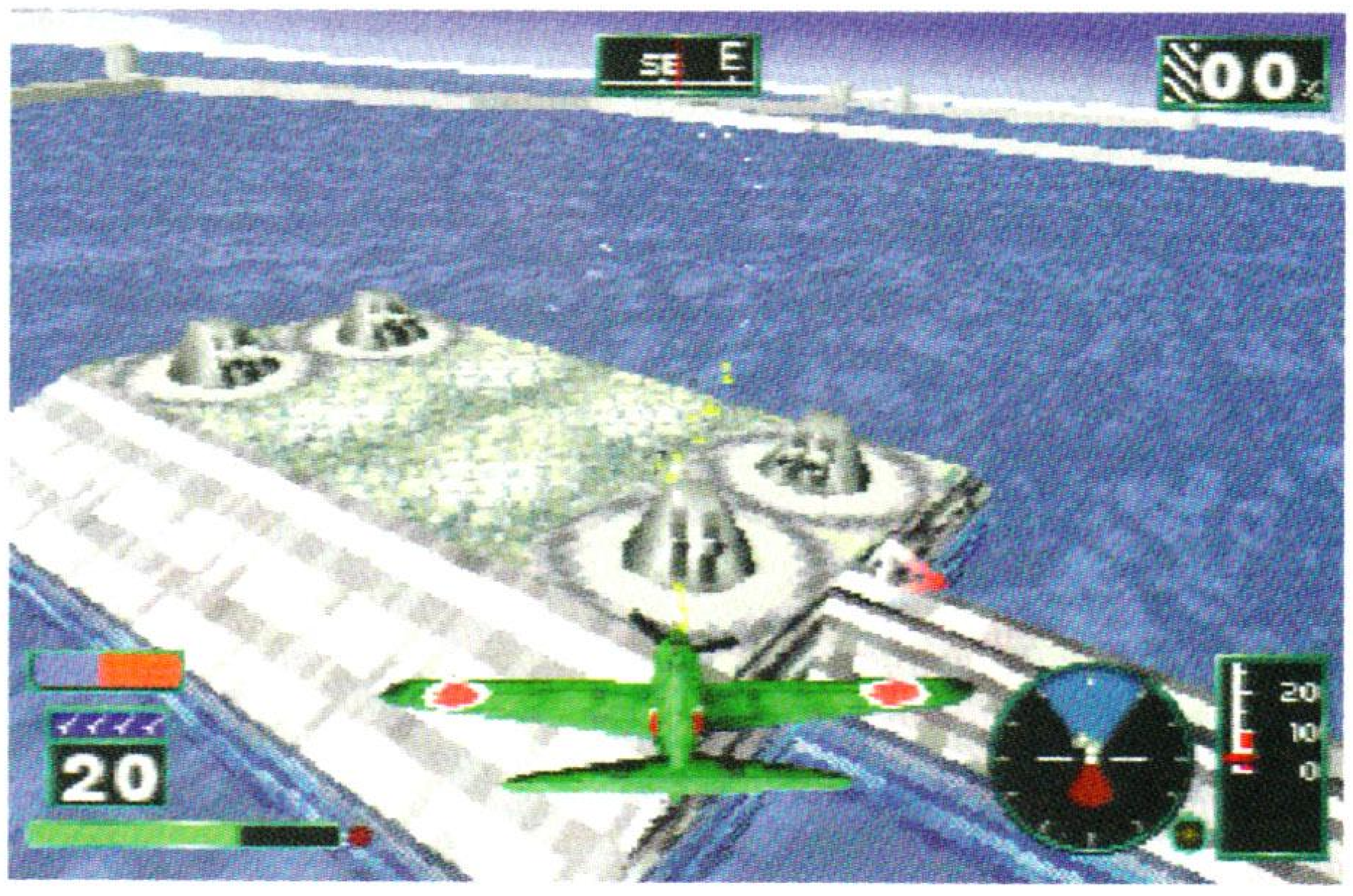
★★★★



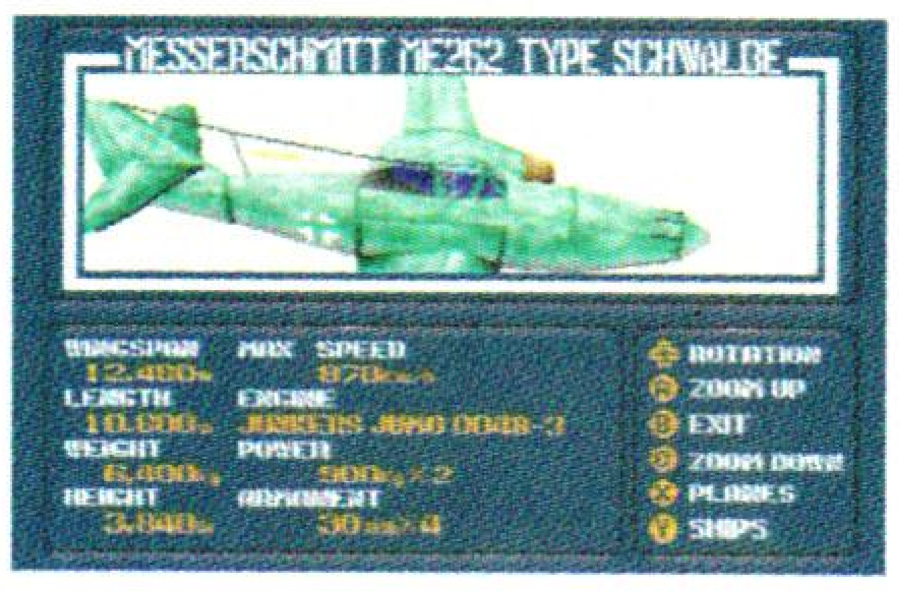


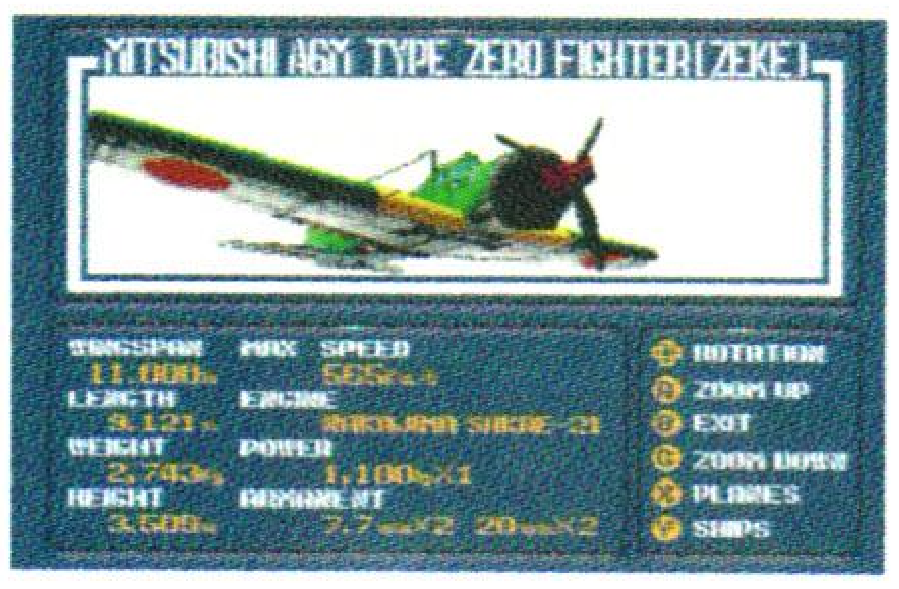
WING ARMS

Take to the skies with SEGA'S latest action flight simulation!

SEGA ATTEMPT AN AIR COMBAT CLONE - THE RESULT IS MOST UNIMPRESSIVE! SMART TEXTURE-MAPS AND AVERAGE BLASTING SAVE THIS TITLE FROM OBLIVION!





The updated "most wanted" games list for Sega Saturn owners, taking into account the latest announcements from America and Japan.

1. FIGHTING VIPERS

Development has started on the Saturn conversion of the current hot Sega fighting game. With AM2 at the helm, this should be hot.

2. MARVEL SUPER HEROES

Capcom have confirmed that Marvel Super Heroes is now in the preliminary stages of conversion on to the Saturn. This should be incredible...

3. DOOM

This remains the favourite PlayStation game at the moment in the **MAXIMUM** offices and bearing in mind the Saturn's speedy texture-mapping facilities, this should be excellent. News soon...

4. VIRTUAL ON

This arcade machine is receiving a limited UK release but is going really well in Japan. A Saturn conversion has been announced.

5. NIGHTS

Check out the news section for the first eye-witness report of Sega's answer to Super Mario Bros 64. No screenshots yet, but maybe next month...

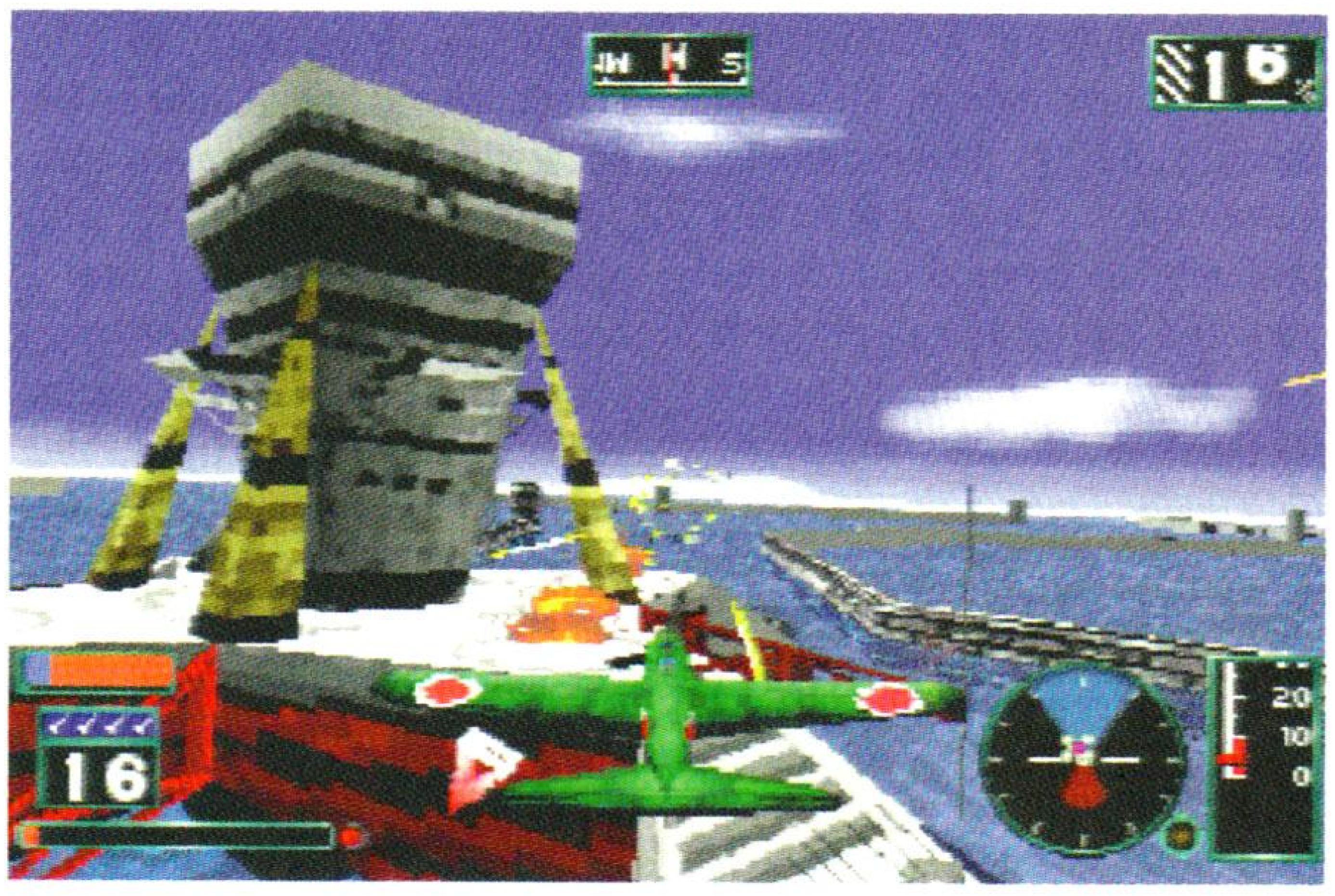
INFORMATION COMPILED
BY **MAXIMUM**

Now that Firestorm is out on the shelves, the poor range of flight games available for the Saturn at least has a top class effort to its name. But, this month Sega have finally got it together to convert Wing Arms, available on import some four months ago.

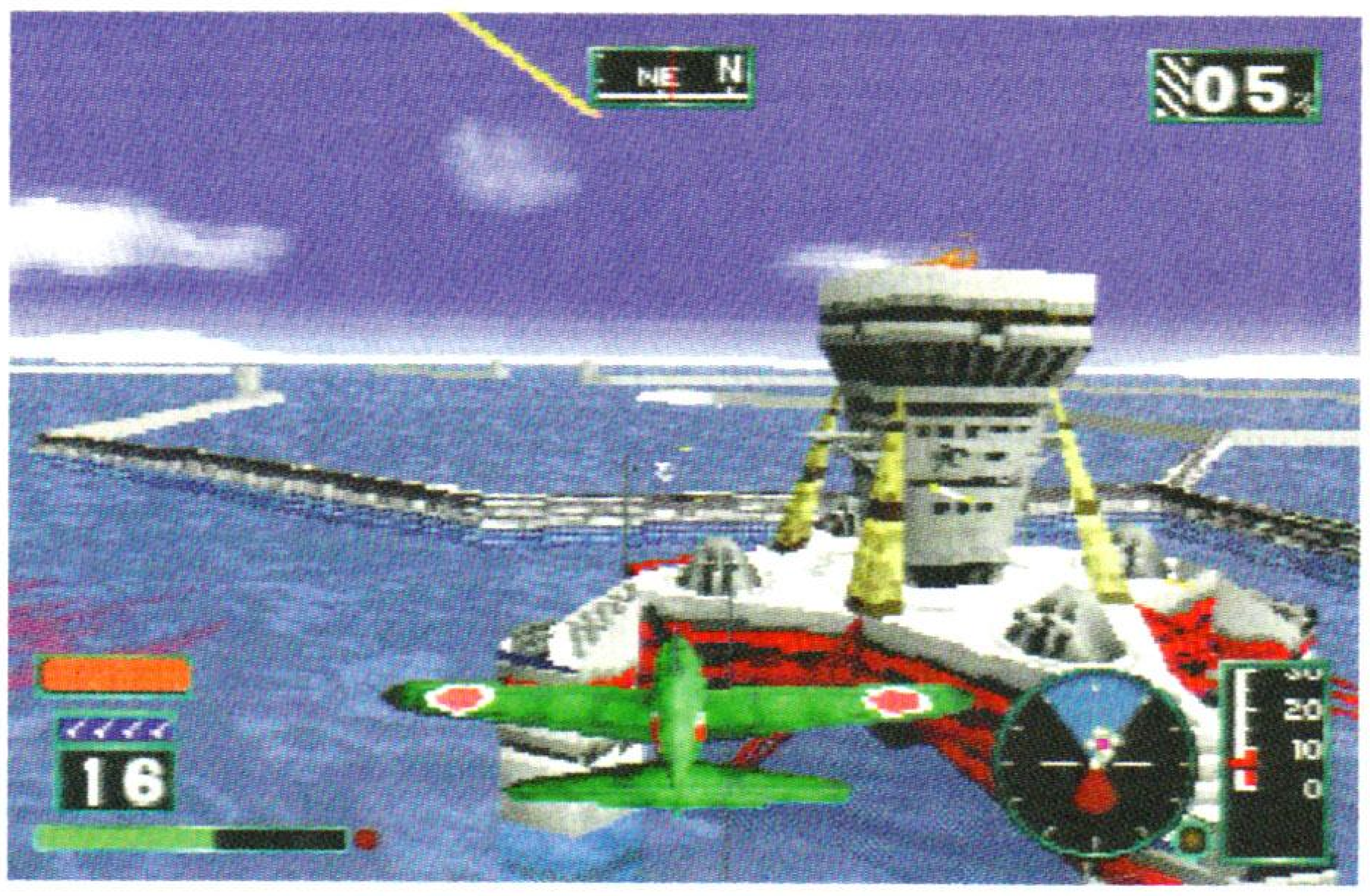
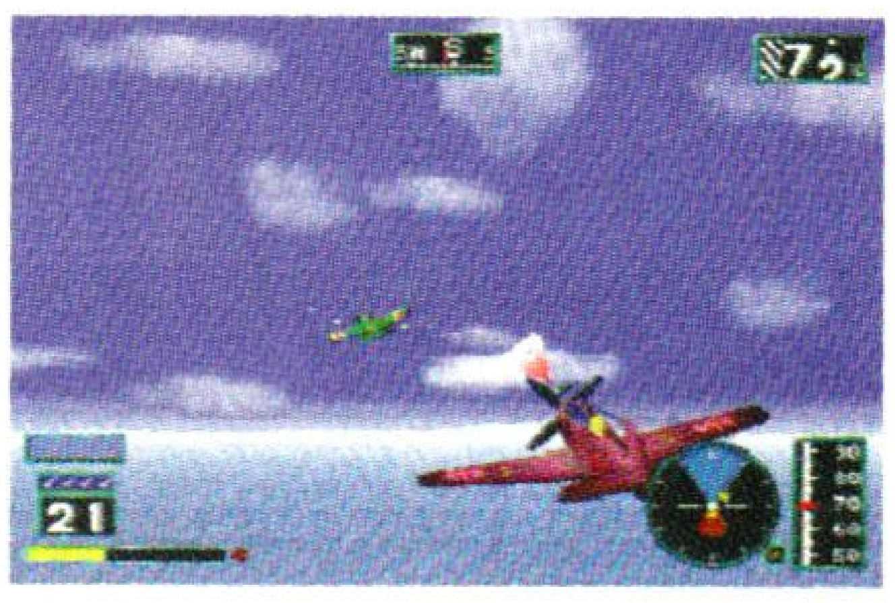
Unfortunately, some would say they shouldn't have bothered at all - in essence, this adds nothing new to the genre, although in a way that doesn't matter seeing as there's only a choice between this and Firestorm anyway. While Wing Arms isn't appalling by any means, it could have been a lot better than this, especially in the graphics department. Here the game is certainly something of a mixed bag - at times the pop-up is barely noticeable. However, in levels like the frankly appalling canyon run, the low resolution texture mapping is frankly appalling. Daytona USA - all is forgiven.

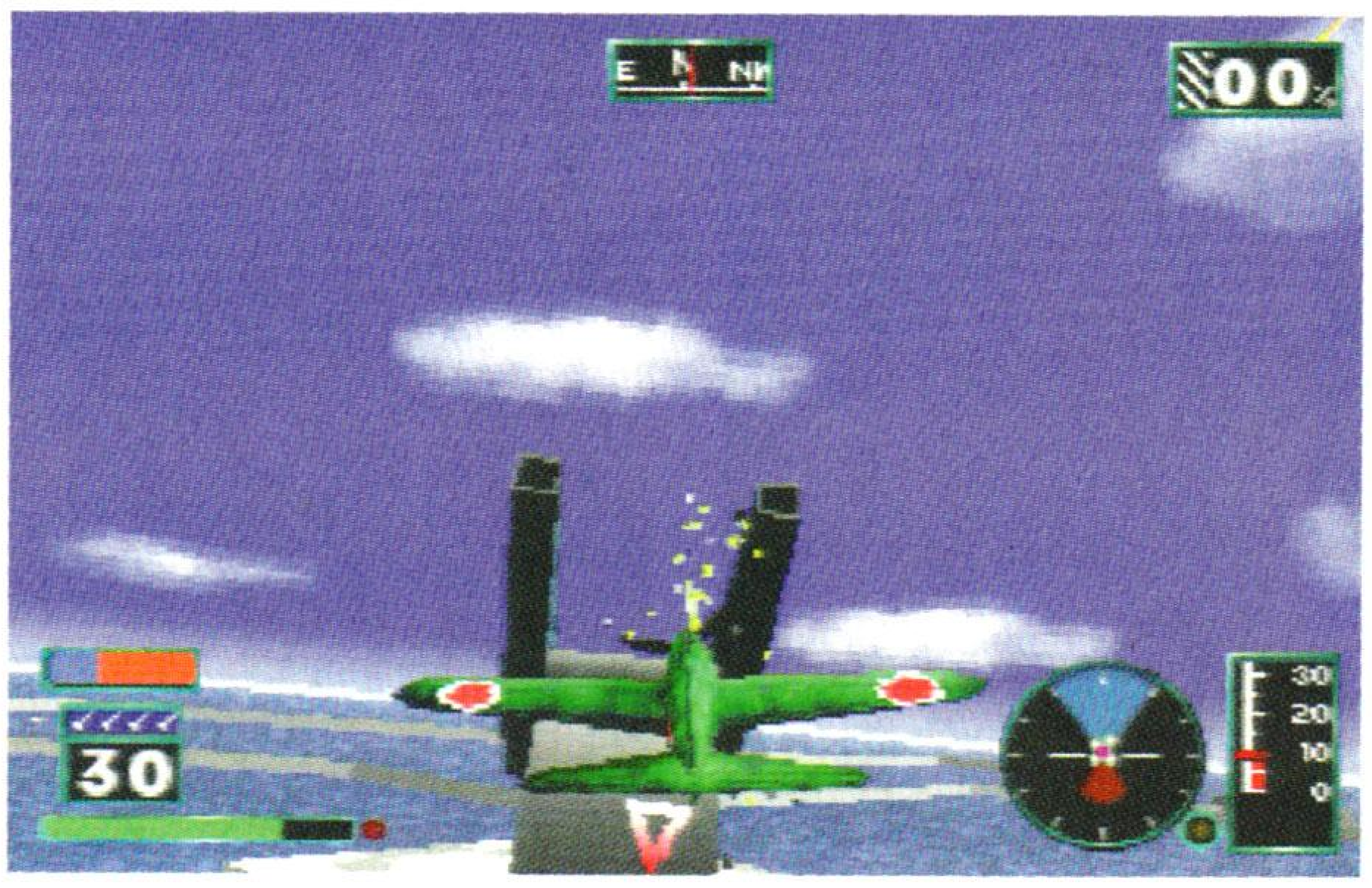
Actually, the first couple of levels aren't bad at all, it's only when you get into the later stages that the quality (or lack of it) begins to show. Now, if you're able to ignore the graphics and concentrate on the gameplay instead, this will probably provide a good few hours of entertainment. And by the same measure, if you particularly like flight sims you'll enjoy this too. But when the only competition comes in the forms of a top-quality game such as Firestorm, you probably have to wonder whether this is worth a look in at all. The answer is definitely in the negative.

★★



GUIDE ALL MANNER OF WORLD WAR II TECHNOLOGY INTO BATTLE IN THIS LACKLUSTRE TITLE!

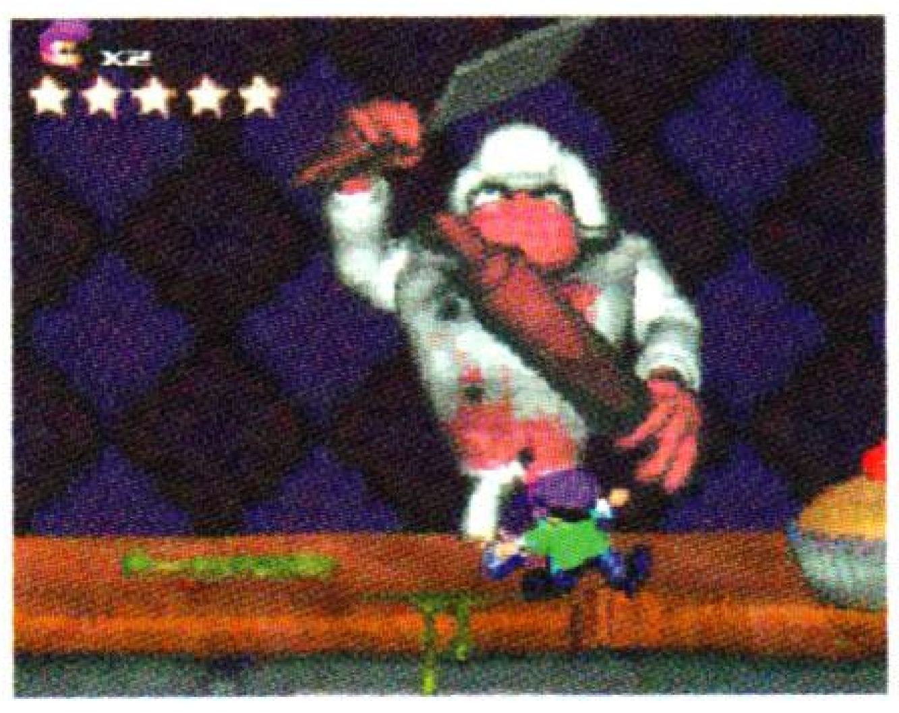



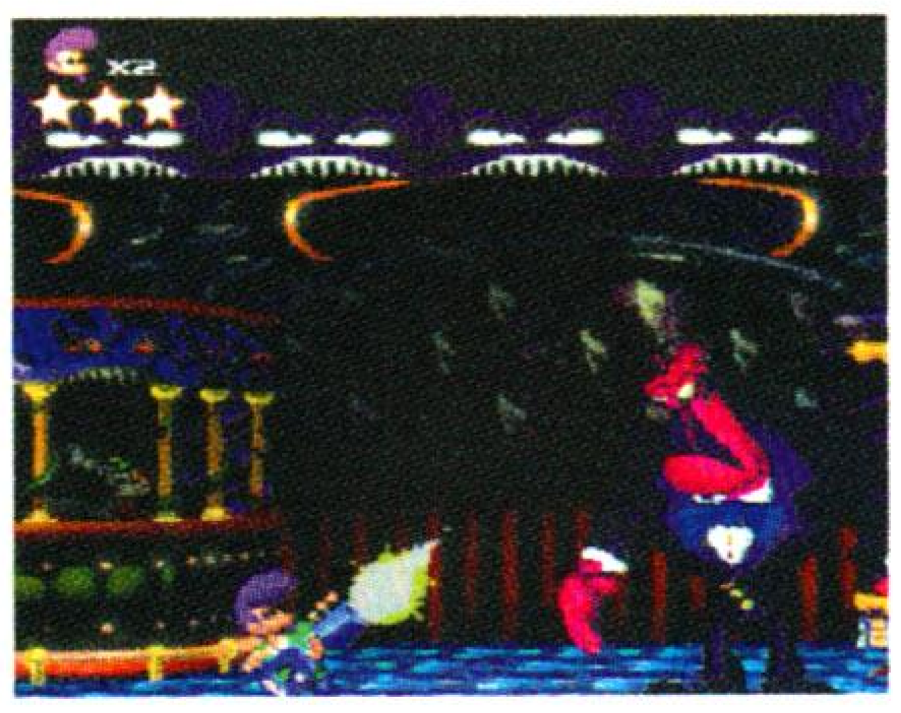


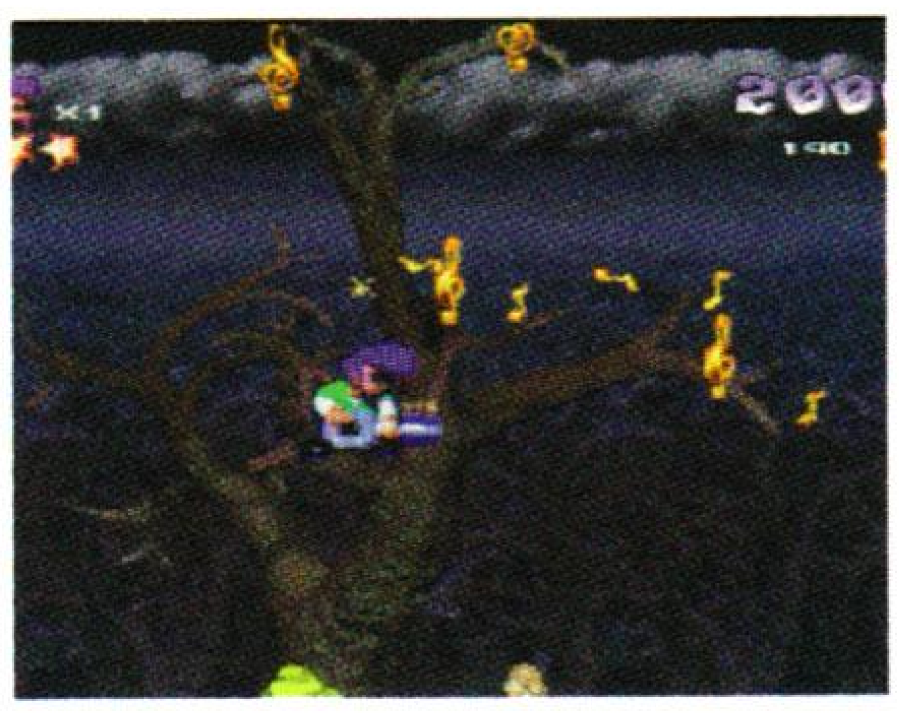
JOHNNY BAZOOKATONE

21st Century boy in 19th Century platformer?

It's been a fair while since anyone has been brave enough to bring out a platformer on the Saturn (Rayman's kicking was enough to put anyone off), but US Gold have been working on Johnny Bazookatone for around a year, and have ploughed loads of cash and hired in plenty of big names on the hope that Johnny B would reap returns a thousand times over. Well, it may bring them the financial gains they require, simply as the marketing campaign has been rather over the top (Johnny's face is in EVERY games magazine and there's billboard posters of him everywhere), but as far as programming credit goes, it probably ranks among the lowest of all time. Even the theory behind the game is hideously dated - JB is a rock star who must rescue his fellow rock pals from the hands of evil L Diablo who wishes to destroy music as we know it. And after listening to the soundtrack composed by the likes of Sad Cafe, you'll probably be wishing that he just gets it over with as quickly as possible.



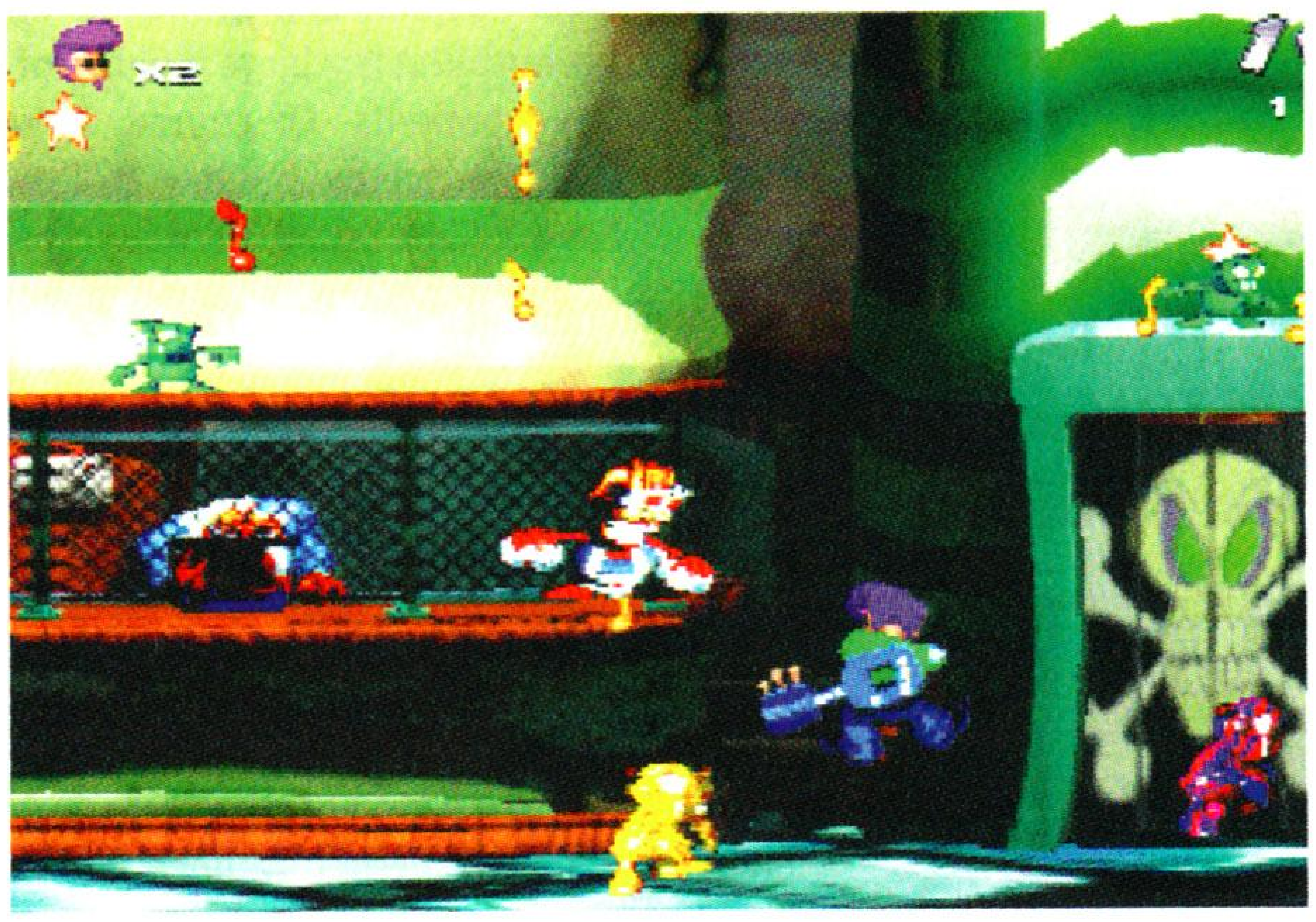




STONE AGE GAMEPLAY COUPLED WITH PRE-RENDERED SPRITES? NO THANKS COME BACK CLOCKWORK KNIGHT - ALL IS FORGIVEN!

to do this, JB is equipped with an encyclopaedic knowledge of rock and a huge gun. Well, we say huge, but when you put this in context with the size of the screen it's actually pretty tiny, as is JB, and all the other sprites that appear. In fact, JB is so small that it's hard to believe that much money was spent developing the guy on a Silicon Graphics machine only to shrink him down to the size of a pinhead. Saying that though, it's quite difficult to believe that any of these graphics were created so badly at all. None of the backgrounds look as though they should be on a 32-bit machine and even the snazzy intro just repeats itself on a loop for around fifteen minutes, with a couple of overlaid effects thrown in for good measure. Still, hat off to the intro - it's the only part of the game that could possibly make you believe that this is a next generation console title.

Unfortunately, the game design is just as bad. There seems to be no logic in the way the levels are laid and, and due to this, you'd have to be one of the most expert white-hot gameplayers in the world to get through any amount of them. Enemies seem to pop randomly out of nowhere, and to destroy them you'll need psychic powers on a par with Mystic Meg - there doesn't seem to be any hard and fast rules to get rid of them. This is the same for the "interactive' scenery too. Sometimes you can jump on mushrooms or springs to get to higher parts of the level, then at other times they just don't work. But this doesn't make the game more fun in a seek-and-ye-shall-find way - nope, it just makes it downright frustrating.



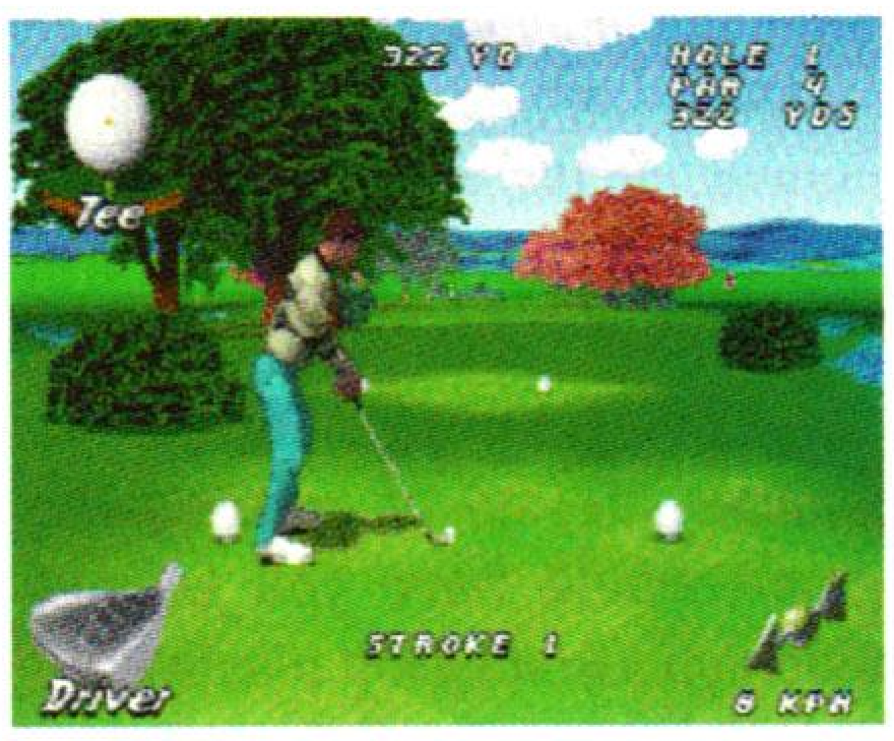
It's a shame that we have to keep using this cliche over and over again, but JB really doesn't belong on a 32-bit console. In fact, it's difficult to imagine where it does belong, as there's plenty of 16-bit games out there that are better than this too. Perhaps that L Diablo guy isn't so bad after all...

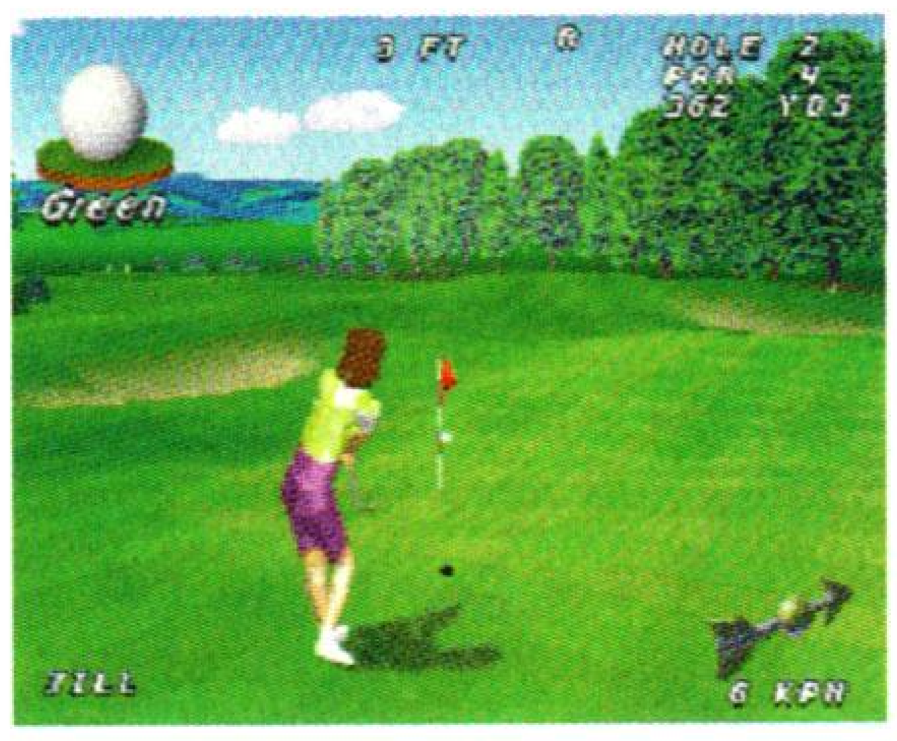
★

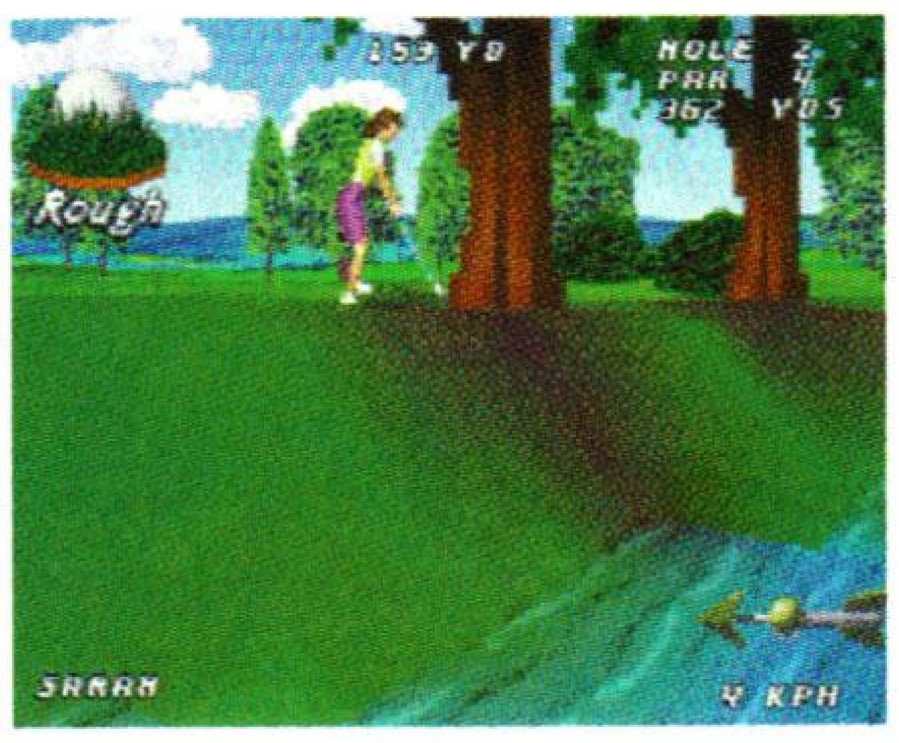
VIRTUAL GOLF

Pull on your plus fours in this suped-up golf sim!

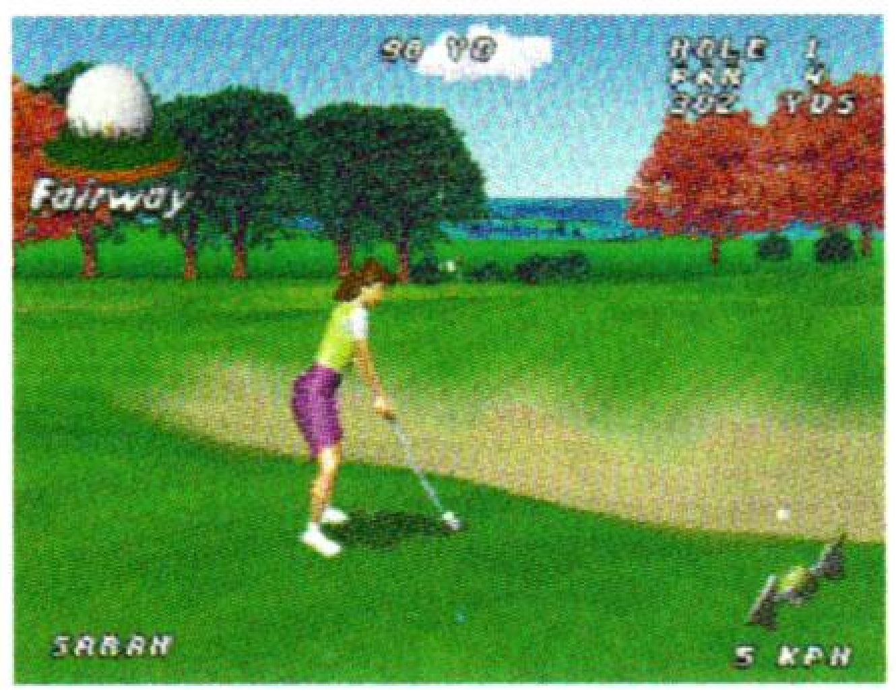
Golf has traditionally always been extremely popular on all consoles, although it's also a somewhat used and abused genre. So far, nothing has really managed to top EA's excellent PGA series on the Megadrive, but that's not to say that people haven't tried - the result usually being far more fussy than is necessary.







This is Core's first foray into the world of golf, although originally this was intended to be a 32X game. Things change pretty quickly huh? When Core, among many other developers realised that the 32X wasn't such a long-term investment as they would have hoped, they quickly switched formats and decided to release this on the Saturn instead. Obviously, they've made the best decision, and luckily, they've also completely rehauled the game so that the graphics are on a par with those of other similar Saturn titles.



In fact, on first play, it may seem as though Core have converted golf perfectly - everything from the ridiculously cheesy clothes to polite clapping and clubhouse camparis has been included and the sprites in particular have more of a "virtua" feel about them - as opposed to the spindly offerings found in sims such as Pebble Beach Golf (however it has to be noted that the crowd doesn't move an inch). And also, to their credit, there's four courses to choose from in all, each distinctly varied. There's also a couple of commentators on hand to laugh at your rubbish shots and offer polite encouragement, and a more English plummy accent you'd' be hard pushed to find. These features help to bring the atmosphere of golf to a console conversion, and the quality of the sound just wouldn't have been possible on a 16-bit machine.

But, there is a down side to all of this. Virtual Golf, although well programmed and nice-looking, tends to irritate rather quickly. It's as if the programmers in a rush to do something fancy with a 32-bit machine have made the game over-fussy, with camera angles galore and voiceovers that haven't been heard since movement and mime classes in primary school. It's still the best golfing game seen on the Saturn so far, but it would be nice to see someone concentrating on the gameplay rather than the presentation for a change.

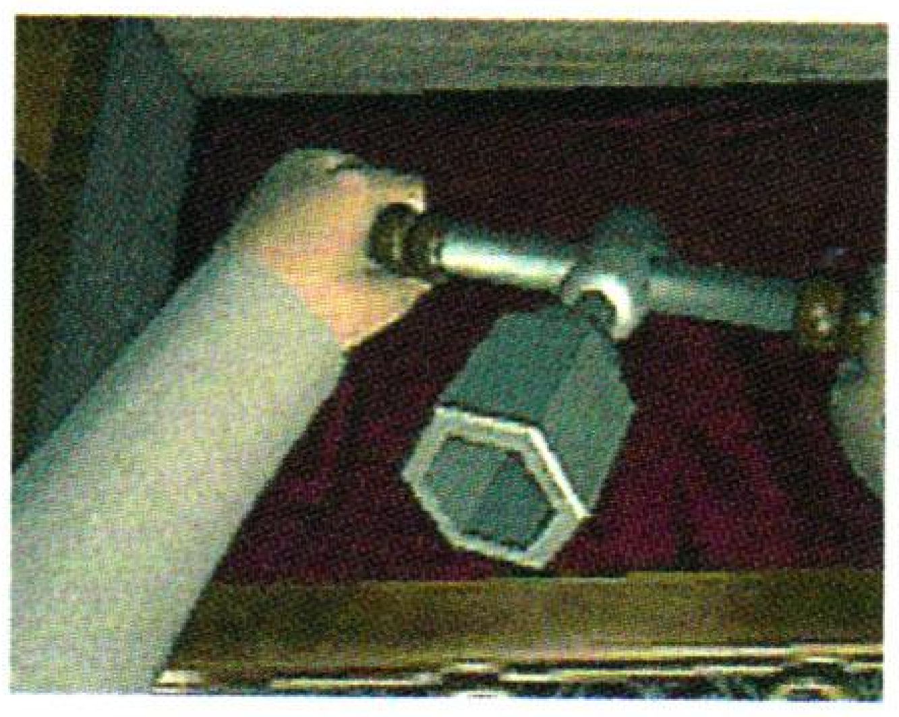
★★★

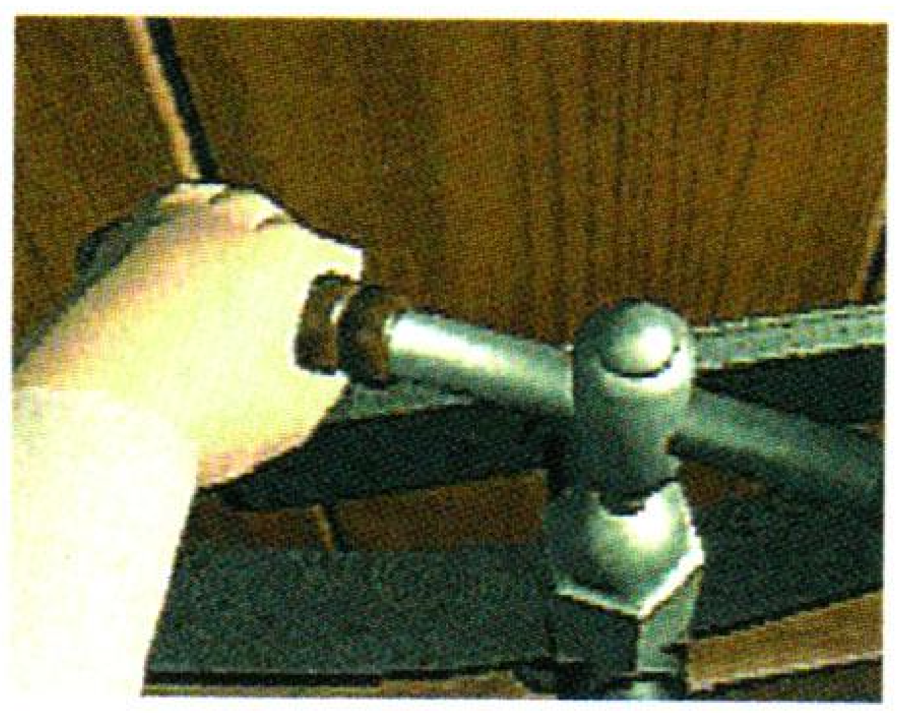
D

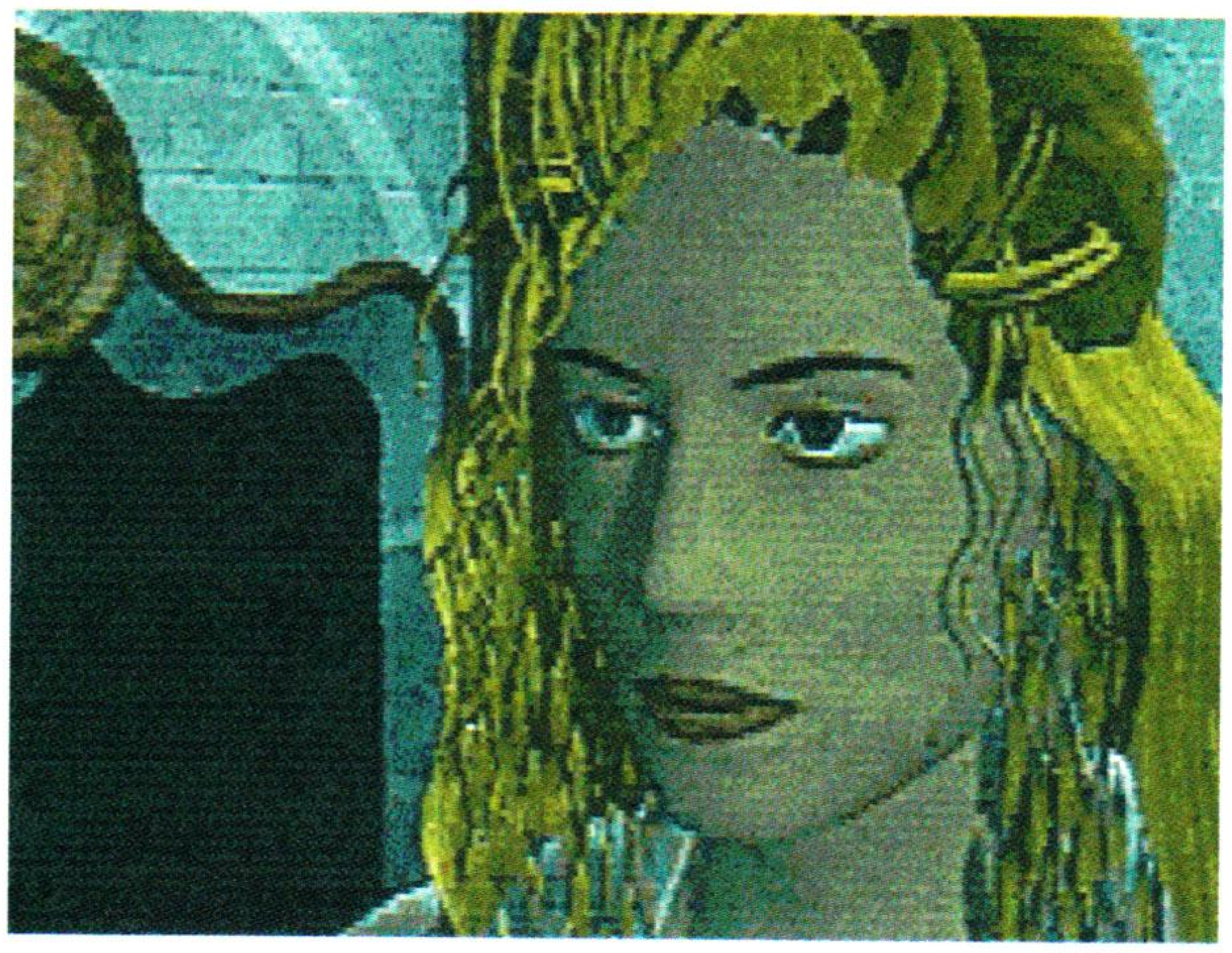
A sinister adventure only for the strong-stomached!

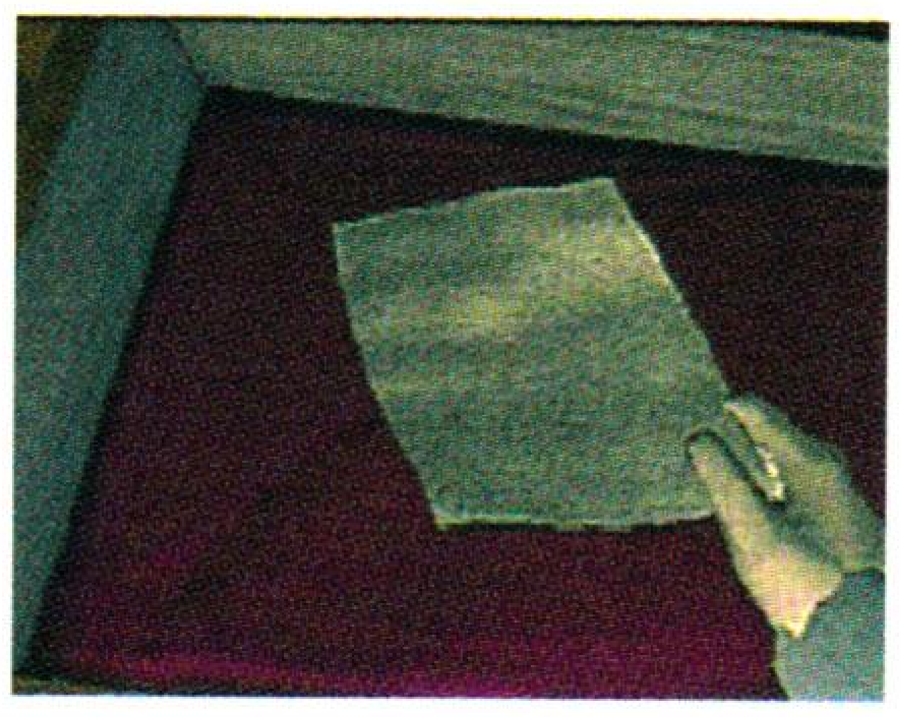
Although the wander-about adventure has been attempted on the Saturn before in the guises of both Mansion of Hidden Souls and Myst, this is the first time that anything with a slightly more gripping storyline has been tried. In fact, it's probably the storylines more than anything else that have made these games so dull in the past, so the arrival of something more juicy is a welcome one.

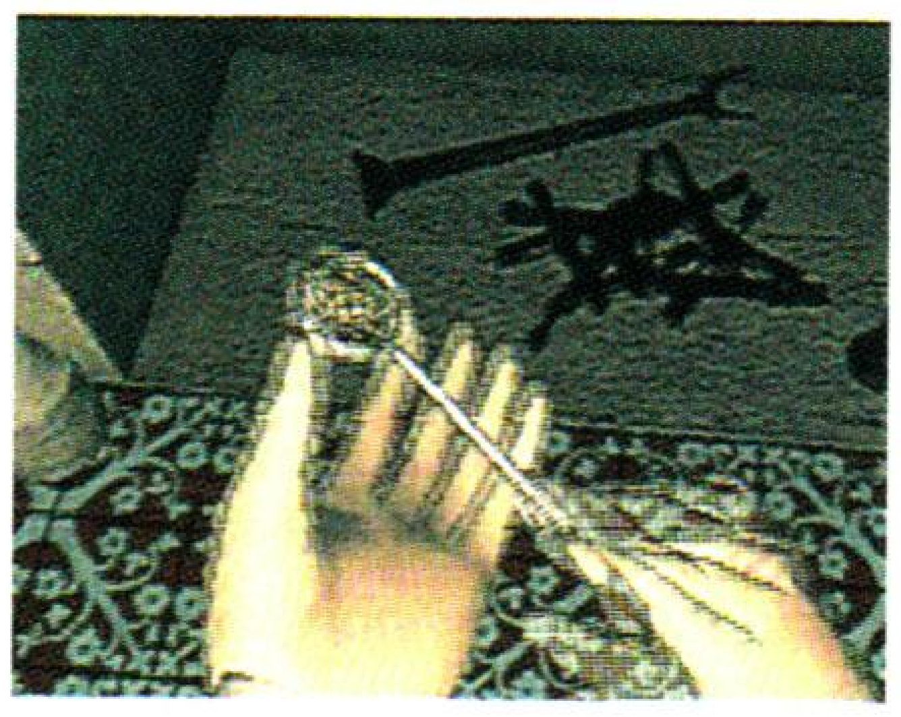
An acclaimed doctor has gone slightly mad down at his local hospital and the result of his outburst is a large number of dead patients. Of course, he's fled the scene, but the police have called upon his daughter in the hope that she can shed some light on the situation. Naturally, she's as puzzled as anyone else, but decides to pay his office a visit one last time in the hope of obtaining a clue regarding his outrageous behaviour. However, when she arrives in the office, she slips through a kind of time warp and ends up in her father's alter-reality, which is basically an assortment of corpses and strange torture devices. Still, she's stuck there now and must embark on an adventure to discover her father's true identity.

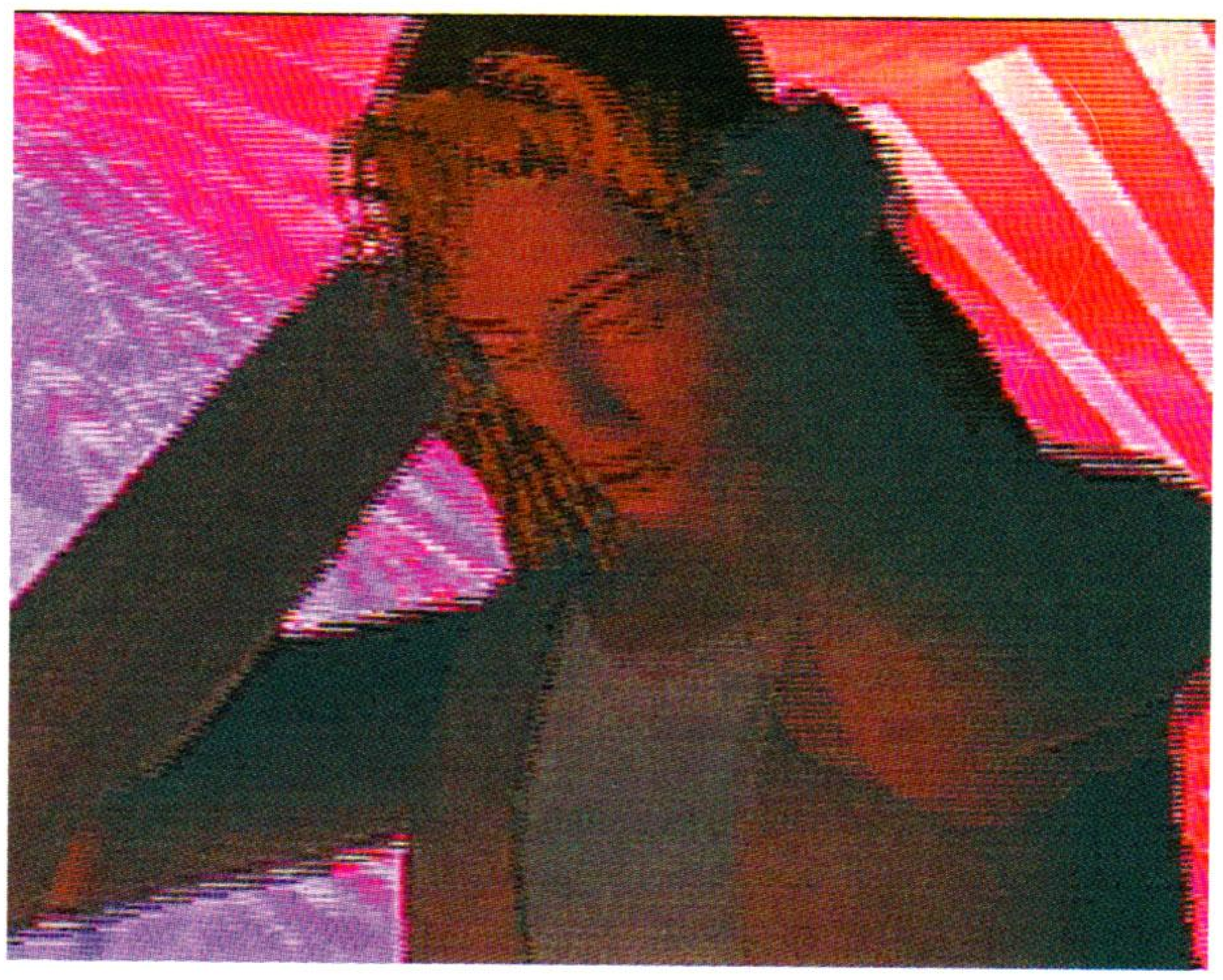










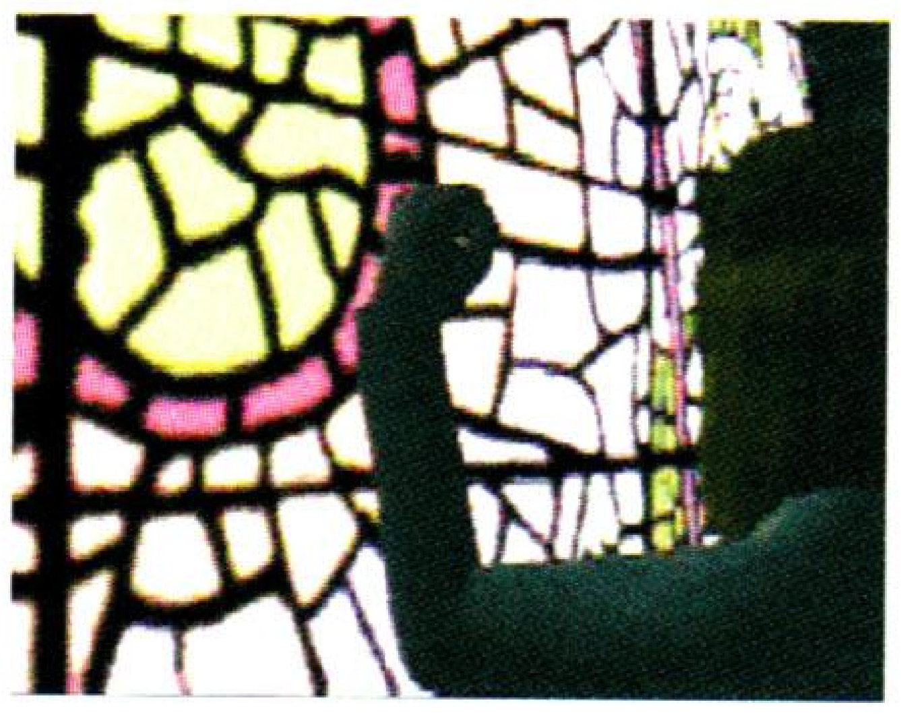


THE TORTURE CHAMBER IS EXPECTING YOU... WILL YOU SURVIVE THE HORRORS OF D? WITNESS ACCLAIM'S ORIGINAL PRODUCT DEBUT HIT SEGA SATURN!

These five games are officially the top-selling Saturn titles released in the UK date. As expected, Sega coin-ops rule the charts, along with a spirited attempt from EA's FIFA Soccer.

1. ***SEGA RALLY***
Officially the fastest-selling Saturn game to date. Make that the fastest selling CD game ever - in the UK.
2. ***DAYTONA USA***
No surprise here - not only is Daytona supremely playable, it was also the only decent game worth buying at launch.
3. ***VIRTUA FIGHTER 2***
Something of a shock - what many consider as the best game ever resides at a lowly slot in our chart - an indication of the wealth of decent Saturn games, perhaps?
4. ***VIRTUA COP***
Yet another Saturn-specific arcade conversion that is utterly excellent, berated only by those who don't really know what they're talking about.
5. ***FIFA SOCCER'96***
The best game of soccer on the Saturn, but still something of a disappointment in terms of pace.

INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY SEGA



This comes in the form of a kind of point-and-click adventure, although there's no mouse button as such. You just guide Laura around the rooms and of there's something of interest, zoom in on the chosen object. Clues are hidden within same objects, or at times you'll be able to pick things up such as keys which open up other parts of the games or reveal more important clues. It's all very much like a traditional RPG but without the fighting and with some great graphics instead.

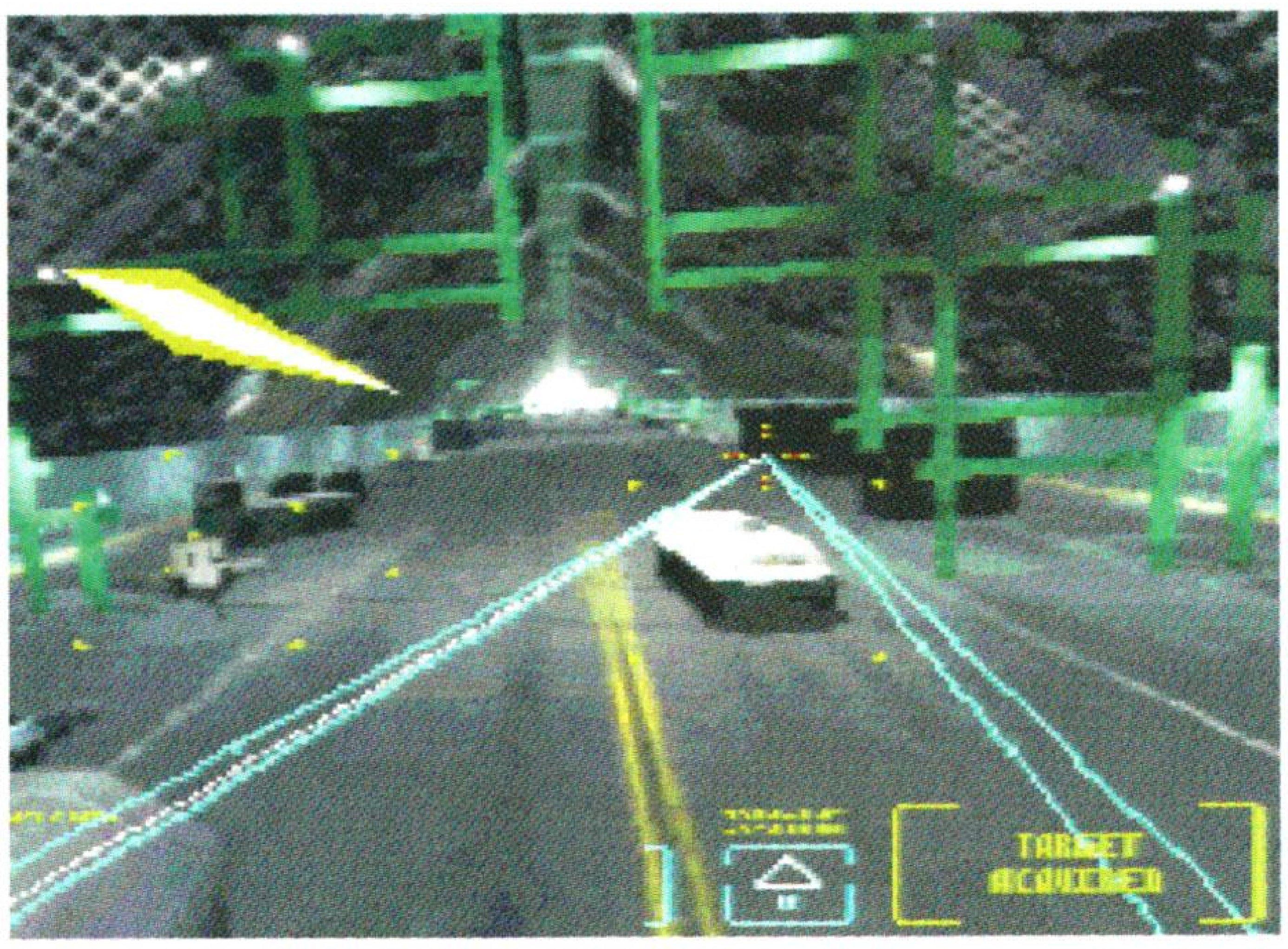
Although at times the gameplay in D can err on the slow side, the story is pretty compelling and once into the game you'll find it difficult to put it down until you've discovered every last clue. In fact, this only works to the game's disadvantage, as it's a pretty short adventure and its addictive nature means that you'll get through it pretty quickly. Some of the puzzles are fairly difficult to solve, but for the most part you'll only be stuck for a couple of minutes before the solution becomes apparent. However, it's the continuity that makes this such an enjoyment, as little parts of the story are revealed along the way, and there's also sub stories such as the enigma of the scarab beetle that pops up from time to time just to spin Laura out in a psychedelic trance.

This isn't perfect by any means, on the whole the adventure is too short and the control system is sometimes cumbersome - you're not exactly able to wander around at will, as the game would have you believe when you first being playing. All too often you have to follow a predetermined route in each of the rooms and this can become very frustrating. but, even with these faults it's still a gripping and gory adventure that's well worth considering - provided you're not a pure action fan.

★★★

ACCLAIM'S FIRST ADVENTURE TITLE FOR SATURN TAKES ON MYST AS KING OF THE PUZZLERS! BUCKETS OF BLOOD GUARANTEED IN THIS TRULY GRIPPING TITLE!

CYBERIA Futurisic cyber cop action!



With things being a bit quiet all round in terms of software releases, it's down to traditionally PC-bearing companies to converts their wares to the Saturn. This month sees the release of Cyberia, which did the rounds to a a rather apathetic PC press around a year ago. Nothing's been changed much since then, and the code has been pretty much ported over line for line for the Saturn version.

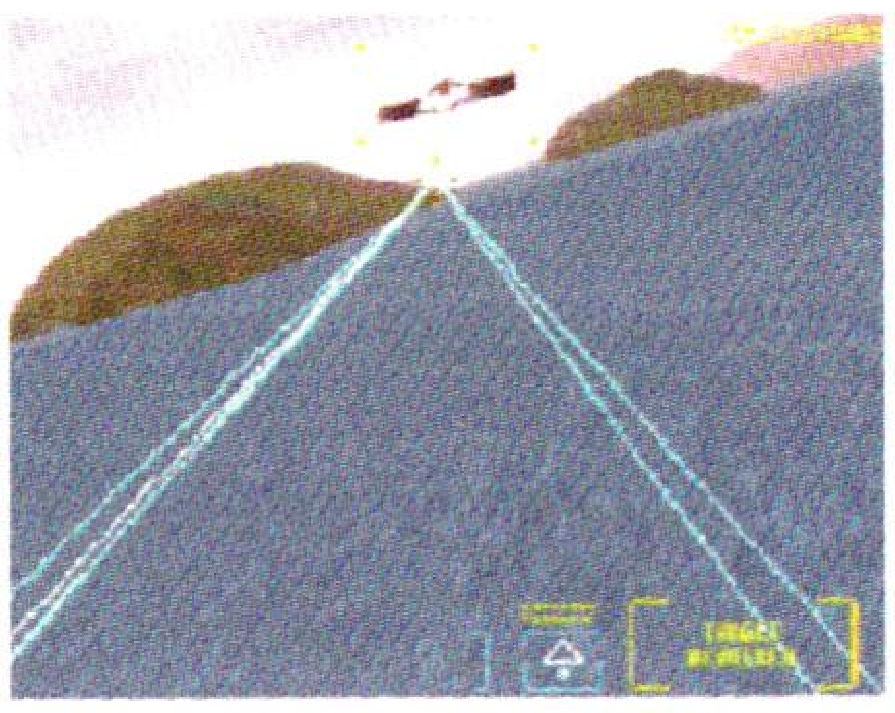
Cyberia is essentially one of those wander around adventure games where the object is to find specific items which will allow you to get further into the game. The basic aim is to infiltrate a corrupt corporation's headquarters and save the whole world. And seeing as this is set in the future there's plenty of cyber-talk and slick metallic looking graphics and it all looks very nice.

It's a shame then that the gameplay is a bit dull all round. Although there's nothing inherently bad about any part of the adventure, it lacks depth. This is mainly because the action is split up into two sections - RPG style action and first person perspective shoot 'em up. Again, there's nothing actually wrong with this, but the two genres don't fit together particularly well. The game seems to chop and change between the two for no apparent reason and as a result, it's very difficult to get into.

Ultimately, RPG purists will find this too shallow and action fans will find it too dull. If you're somewhere in between you might find it a worthwhile buy.

★★★

IT'S AN INTERACTIVE MOVIE - THE FULL-MOTION VIDEO GENRE MAKES ITS UK DEBUT ON SATURN!



CAN INTERPLAY'S ADVENTURE BLASTER CUT THE MUSTARD IN THE SATURN MARKET?

WORLD CUP GOLF Do US gold have what it takes to create the perfect golf game?

Developers US Gold managed to slip this one out just before Christmas, although reviewers didn't actually get their hands on to copies until a few weeks ago. Why? Well, nothing to do with it being sub-standard, is it? *Oh no.*

World Cup Golf only features one course, which is a bit measly when you consider all that unused CD space, but at least it's a fairly nice course, set in a hot country with lots of lovely birds tweeting in the background. And, it has to be said that the graphics (only of trees and clubs admittedly) are very good indeed. But, after all, they are only trees aren't they? How hard is it to draw really nice trees these days?

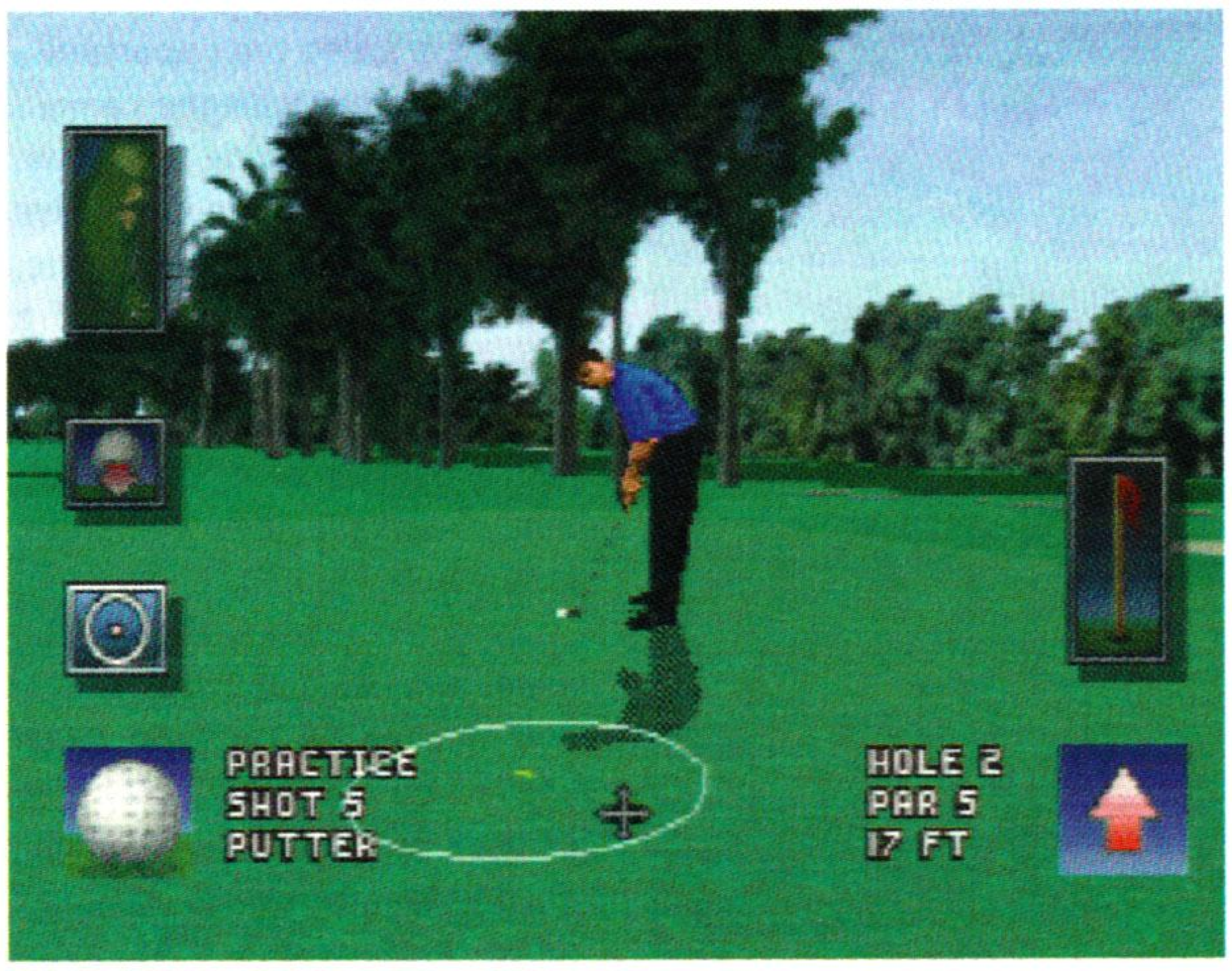
And thus lies the biggest problems with this offering. US Gold seem to think that supplying the player with nice trees to look at, they can ignore the rest of the game and no on will probably notice. Which is pretty unfortunate, because the rest of the game isn't very good. It seems that whatever precautionary measures you take to set up the perfect shot, the ball never ends up where you want it to be. And that's *after* you've spent a good couple of hours getting used to the controls, which in itself is a monstrous effort.

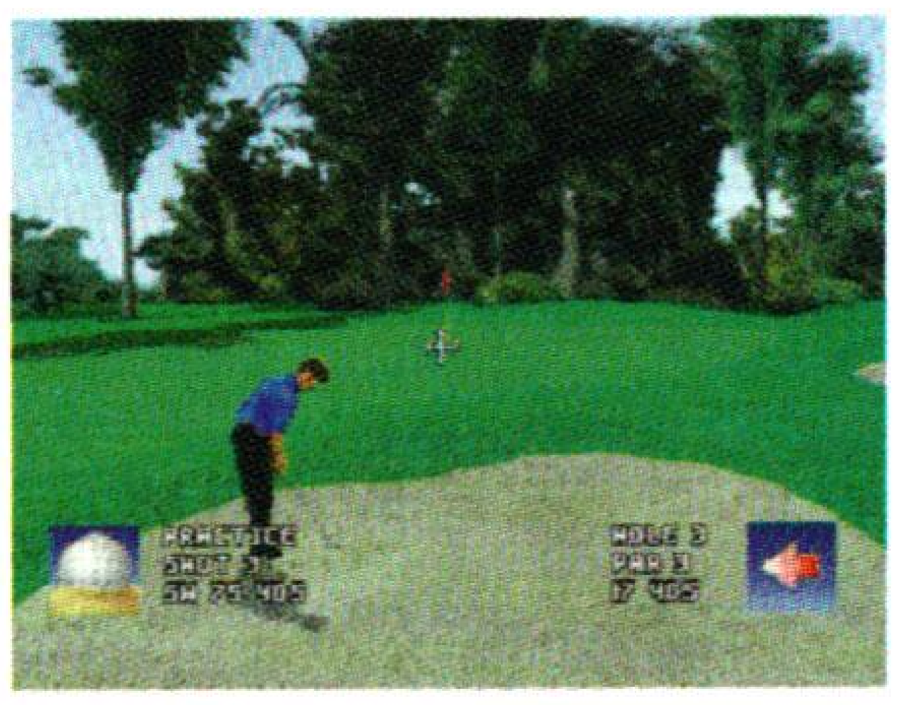
It just seems that very little thought was put into this title, and the result is, a very shallow game. This is extremely evident after you've taken your shot and you get to see your ball pootling off into the distance. There's no camera angle changes, no fly-bys, nothing. Plus, there's far too many menus to access at the best of times, and this makes for a very frustrating play.

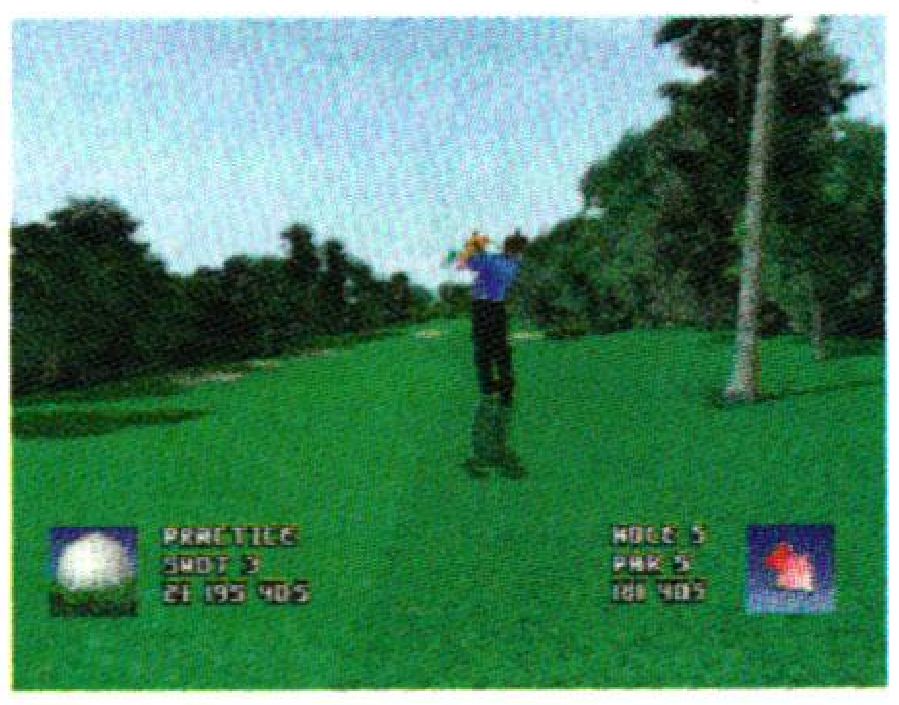
World Cup Golf just isn't deep enough to satisfy long-standing golf fans, and it's too fiddly to being non-golf fans onto the fold. One course is not enough to attract anyone and even when you compare this with the less than perfect Virtual Golf from core, it still seems far too shallow.

★★

THIS PRE-RENDERED GOLFING TITLE HAS FINALLY ARRIVED!



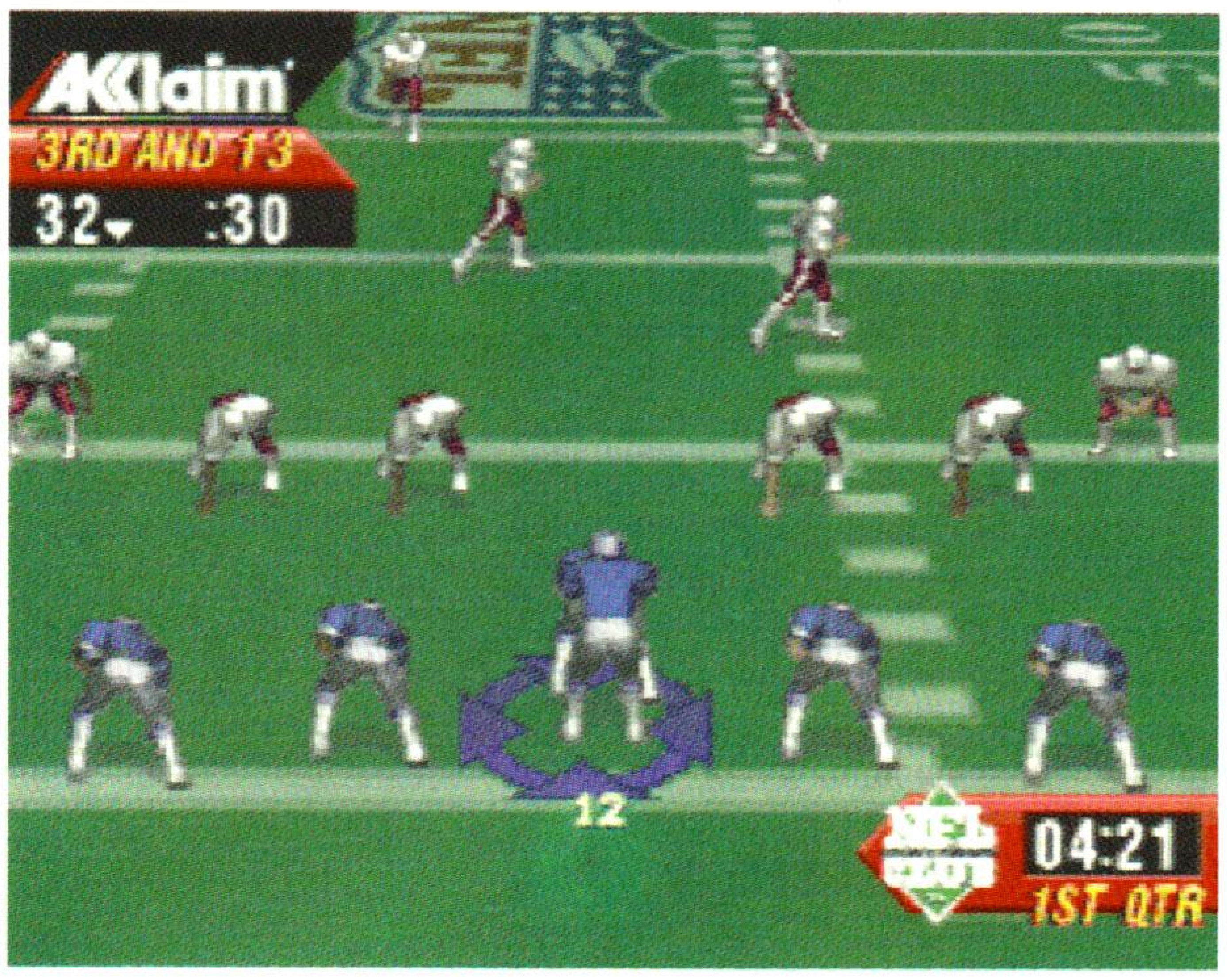


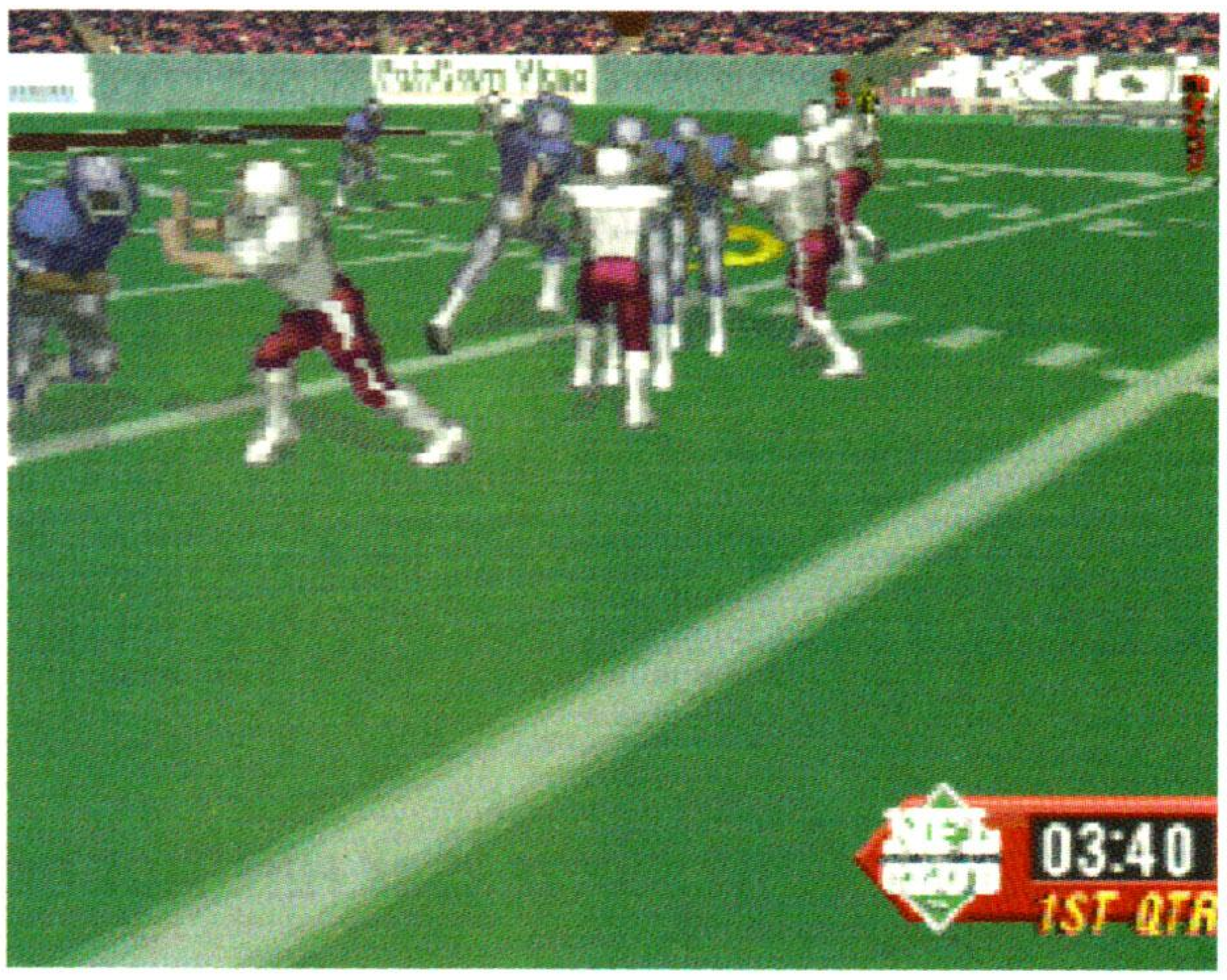


NFL FOOTBALL

Multi-angled, multi-optioned American Football! But is it still popular on the Saturn?

04:56
2ND QTR


Acclaim
3RD AND 13
32 :30
12
NFL CLUB
04:21
1ST QTR


Acclaim
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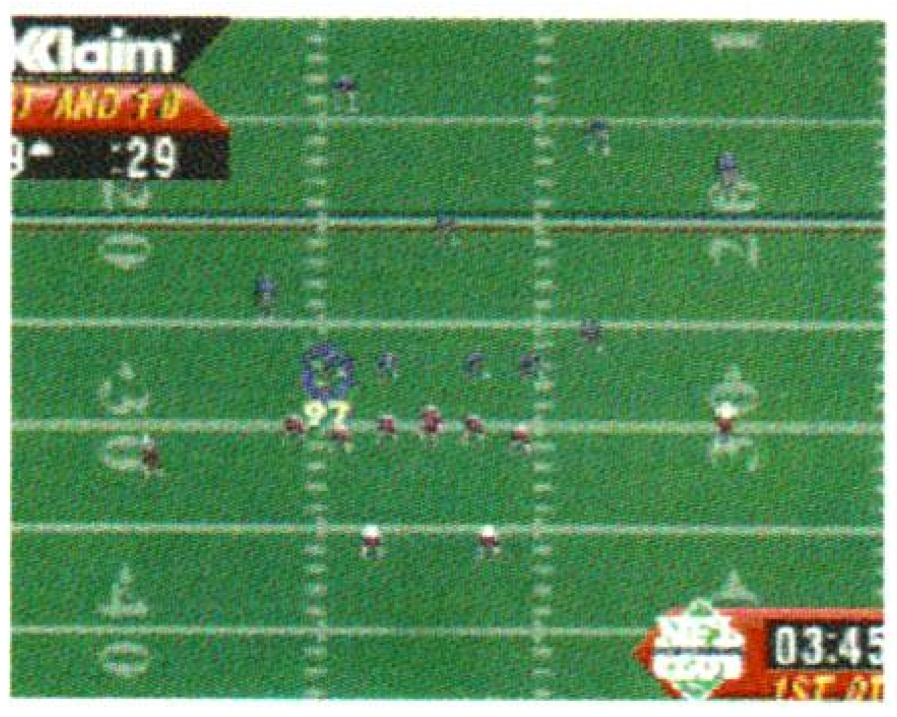
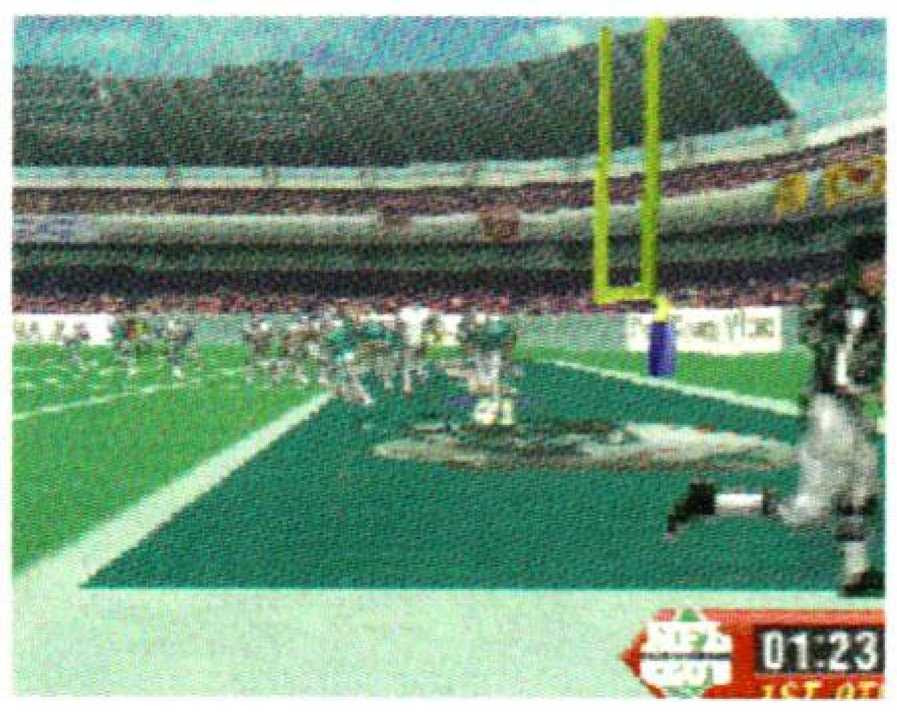
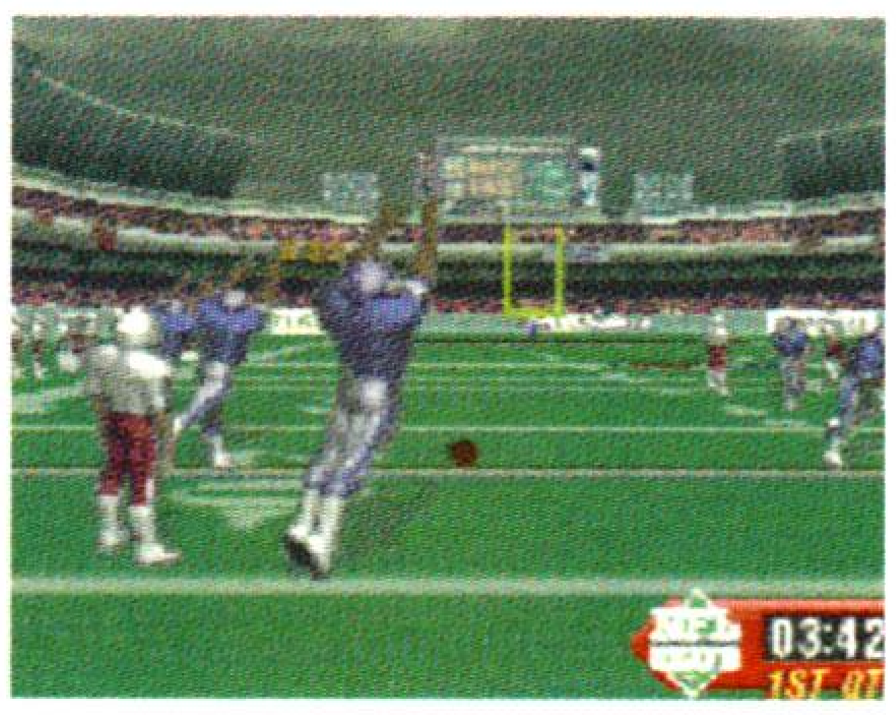
1ST QTR

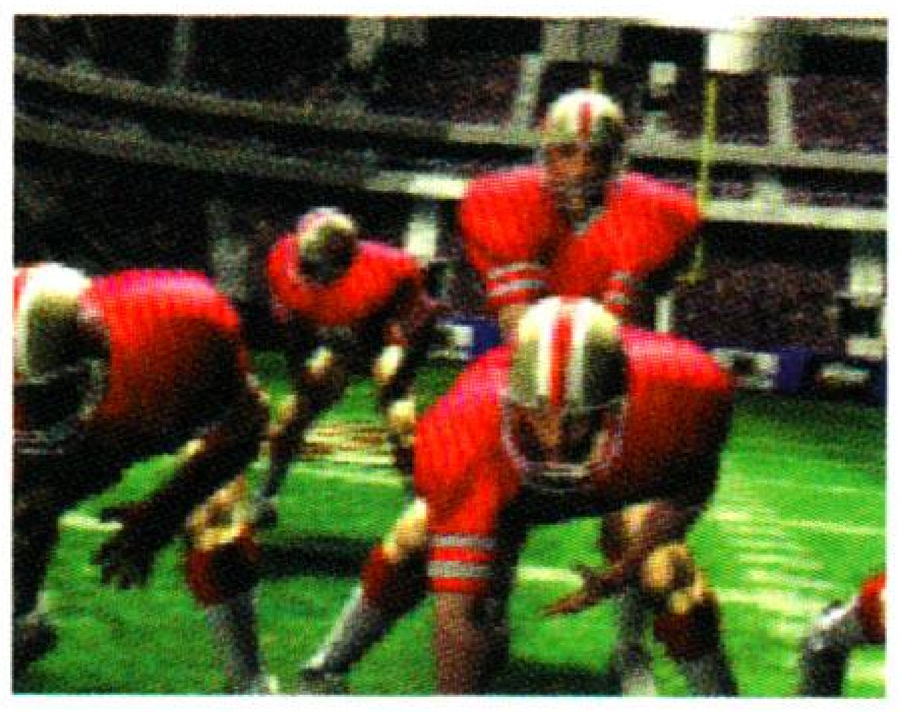






CHAIN MEASUREMENT

The Saturn equivalent of the highly rated Quarterback Club arrives on the shelves!



Since EA have politely declined the opportunity to publish an American Football game on the Saturn (for the time being a least), it's up to other software companies to come up with the quality footie goods. And it seems as though most of them aren't interested either. Acclaim however, don't seem to mind the obscurity of American football in this country, and have converted their NFL football title, which has already appeared on the Megadrive and the 32X.

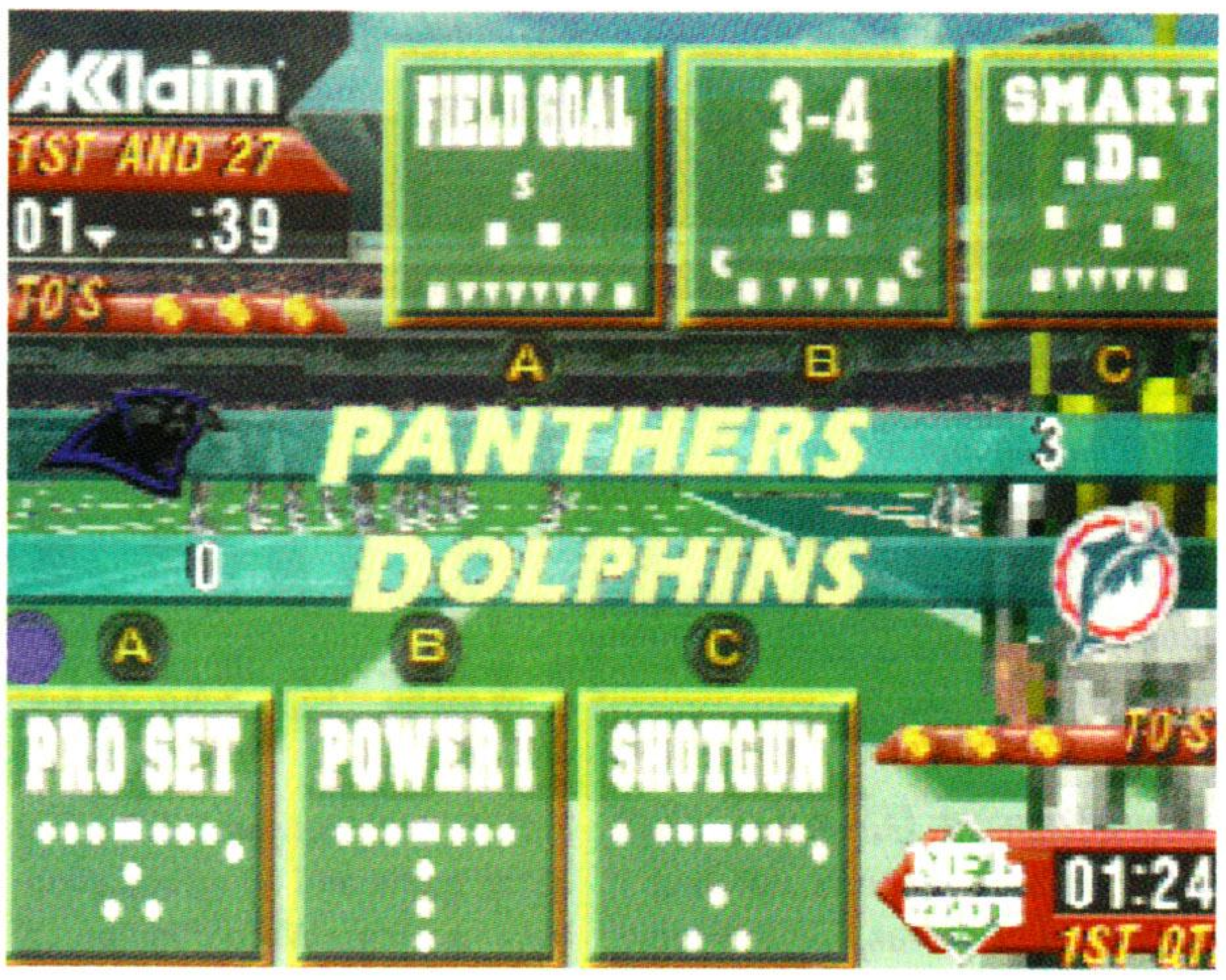
It's a shame then, that no one's that interested in American Football these days. In the height of American footie frenzy, you couldn't get hold of a copy of the excellent John Madden Football for love nor money, but these days they're selling them for around a tenner in second hand shops. But, with this being a new machine and with NFL being the only game available, you can expect to see something a little more spectacular. Well, that's the theory anyway.

You'll be glad to hear that both the graphics and animation have been somewhat boosted from the 16-bit versions and there's also the opportunity to fiddle about with the camera angles whilst playing the game. And among the more innovative features is the historic mode, which puts you in charge of a famous match. You don't get to play the whole game through - just a quarter of it, but it certainly beats playing a complete, long-winded match.

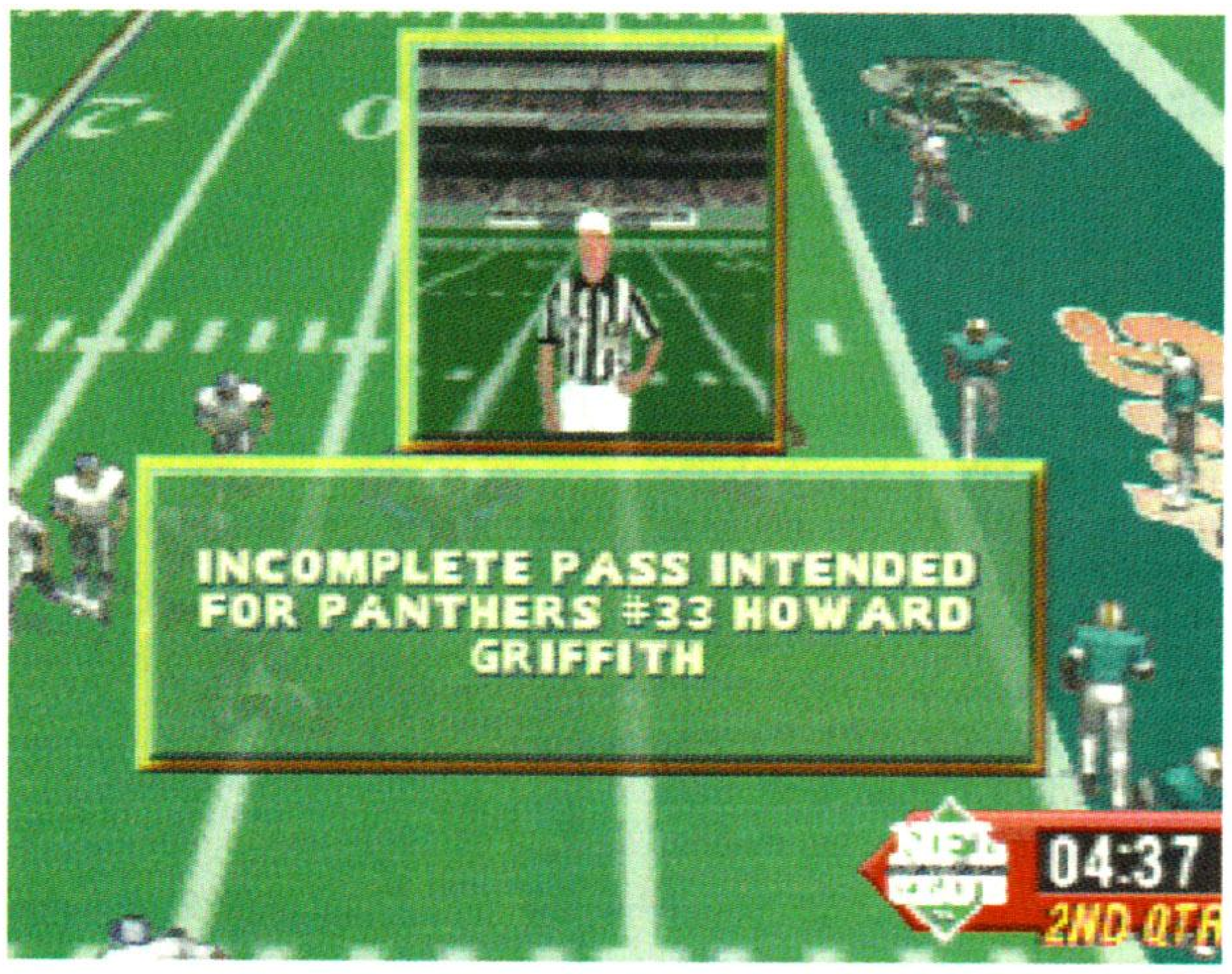
As you'd expect, there's the usual army of options to select, and depending on how much you're into the game, they may or may not make much difference to you. However, you can't deny that Acclaim have managed to include just about everything needed to make American Football, well, American Football. It also plays very smoothly too, and manages to be entertaining without being too fussy.

If you're into American football, there's no doubt that you'll find this an essential purchase, although everyone else may find the rules a bit fussy and confusing.

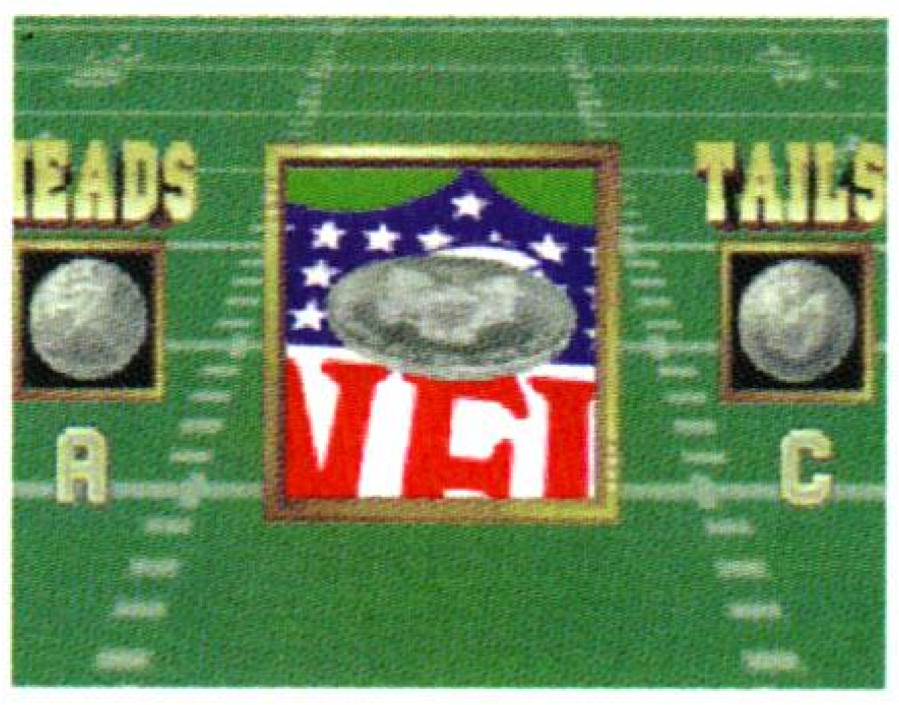
★★★★


Acclaim
1ST AND 27
01 :39
TO'S
FIELD GOAL
3-4
SMART D
A
B
C
PANTHERS
3
0
DOLPHINS
A
B
C
PRO SET
POWER I
SHOTGUN
TO'S
NFL CLUB
01:24
1ST QTR

A solid American Football simulation which more than makes up for the absence of John Madden Football on the Saturn!


INCOMPLETE PASS INTENDED FOR PANTHERS #33 HOWARD GRIFFITH
NFL CLUB
04:37
2ND QTR

HOME
CUNNINGHAM
NFL
SPEED
AGILITY
SCRAMBLING
AWARENESS
RANGE
ACCURACY
KRIEG
AWAY
SELECT

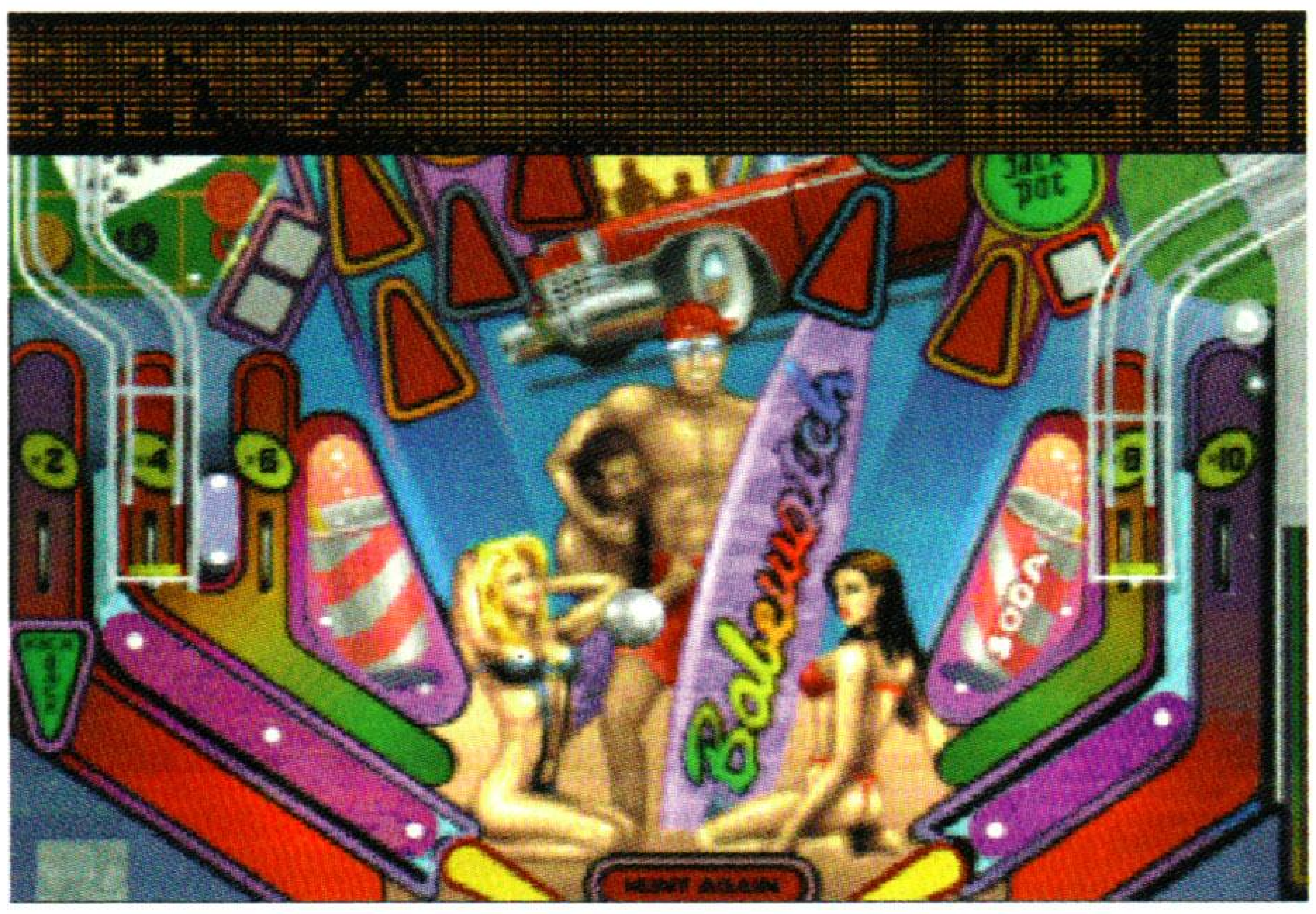

HEADS
TAILS
NFL
A
C

TRUE PINBALL

The most accurate pinball conversion to date?

Console pinball games are a strange bag. Surely the real enjoyment from pinball comes from popping down the pub or the arcade and pumping a few coins in for a while? Once you've converted it on to a console, paid £50 for the privilege, then get to play it free for evermore it begins to lose some of its attractiveness. The sheer novelty of playing pinball comes from seeing how long 50p can last you. Once this challenge is taken away, it can become a bit tedious.

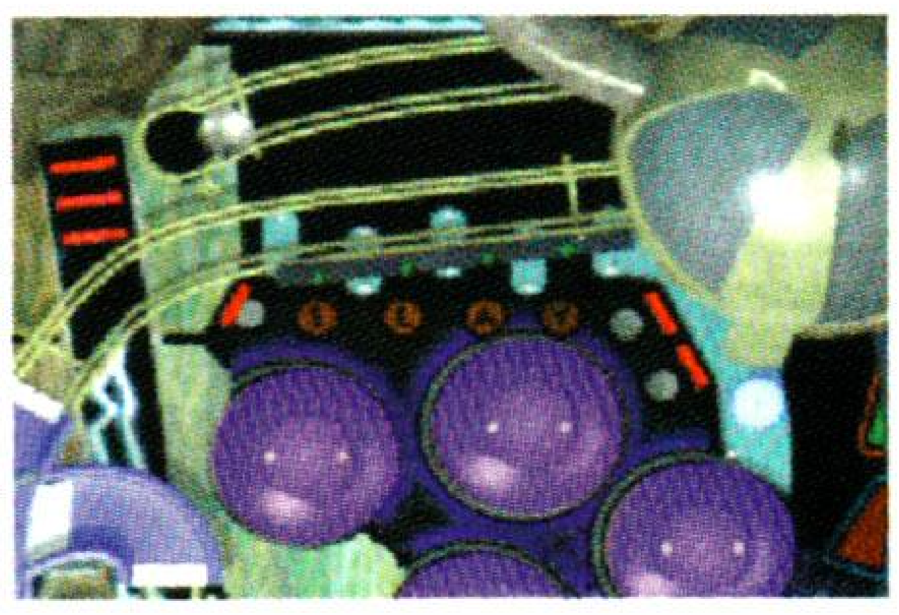
Still, plenty of people have managed to make a decent pinball sim, albeit by changing the rules of the game, sometimes drastically, to make for a more exciting play. This usually comes in the form of sub-games, extra bosses, secret tables, massive points bonuses - anything and everything to liven the game up. But developers Ocean didn't want to do that. No, they wanted to bring the *real* spirit of pinball onto console, believing it to be so pure that not one aspect of it should be adulterated in any way. However, what this means in reality is, there's no sub-games to break the monotony, no bonus tables, no bosses. Just pinball.



To be fair, there are three tables on offer, and all of the features on offer (not many) work perfectly adequately, and even look quite nice, although they are pretty tasteless (babewatch in particular). But, looking "nice" is the least you could expect, seeing as nothing happens in True Pinball apart from flipping the ball around the table. For the most part, True Pinball is incredibly dull, mainly because it's exactly like a real pinball game. Surely, when you have the opportunity to expand on a game to make it more exciting, you'd snap it up, not just be content with the way things are in real life. Unless you're absolutely desperate to play pinball, this isn't even worth considering. Look forward to Ocean's True Tiddlywinks in a couple of months.

★★

Ocean evoke the spirit of pinball, but is it worth attempting on Saturn?



FIFA SOCCER '96

Electronic Arts effectively sew up the Saturn soccer market

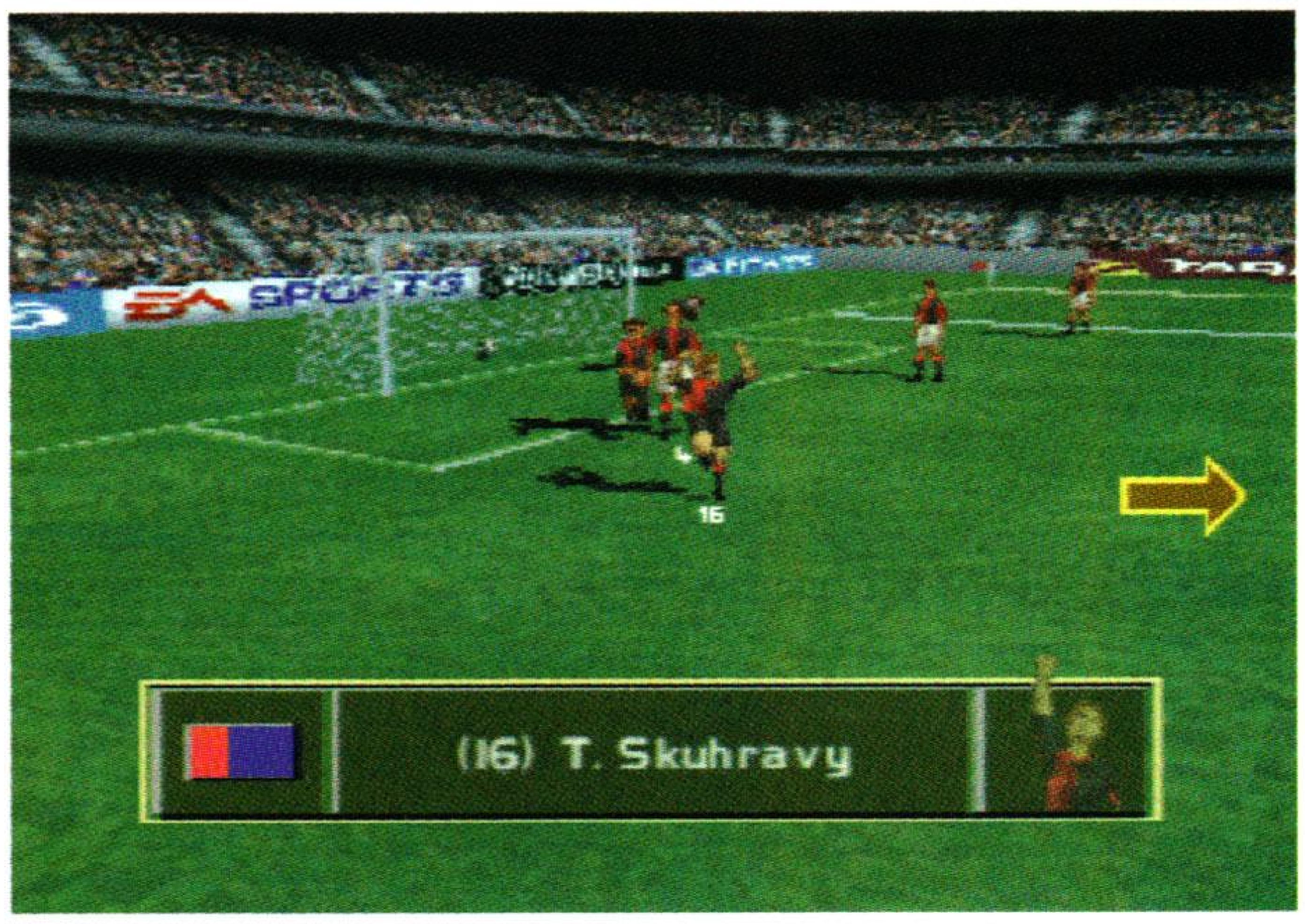
Electronic Arts have a reputation for quality in the field of sports simulations and this long-awaited release is unlikely to damage their good name.

First of all, let's get something straight - this isn't a perfect game by any stretch of the imagination and it also must be noted that the game does suffer when compared to its PlayStation cousin. Although the look, feel and sound of the game is pretty much the same, FIFA runs at a reduced frame rate which is only just about effective in conveying the action of the sport.

In this respect, EA really need to have their knuckles rapped - their is absolutely no excuse for the Saturn version of FIFA to be any slower at all than the Sony game. Just about all the major programming houses these days are able to produce extremely close conversions - witness WipeOut and most tellingly of all, Actua Soccer. Clearly, in this case, the Christmas release date for the finished product has come before considerations of quality.

This actually points to a major weakness in EA's next generation policy - their cross-platform porting techniques seems to be rushed at best, not taking advantage of the specific machines' capabilities (witness PlayStation Road Rash this month).

Any way, we digress. Despite these major failings (which we have received some complaints about, actually), FIFA remains the dominant soccer in the Saturn market. The EA Sports game mechanics are far more advanced than the likes of Victory Goal and the ludicrous Hatrick Heroes, and this sophistication is very welcome indeed.



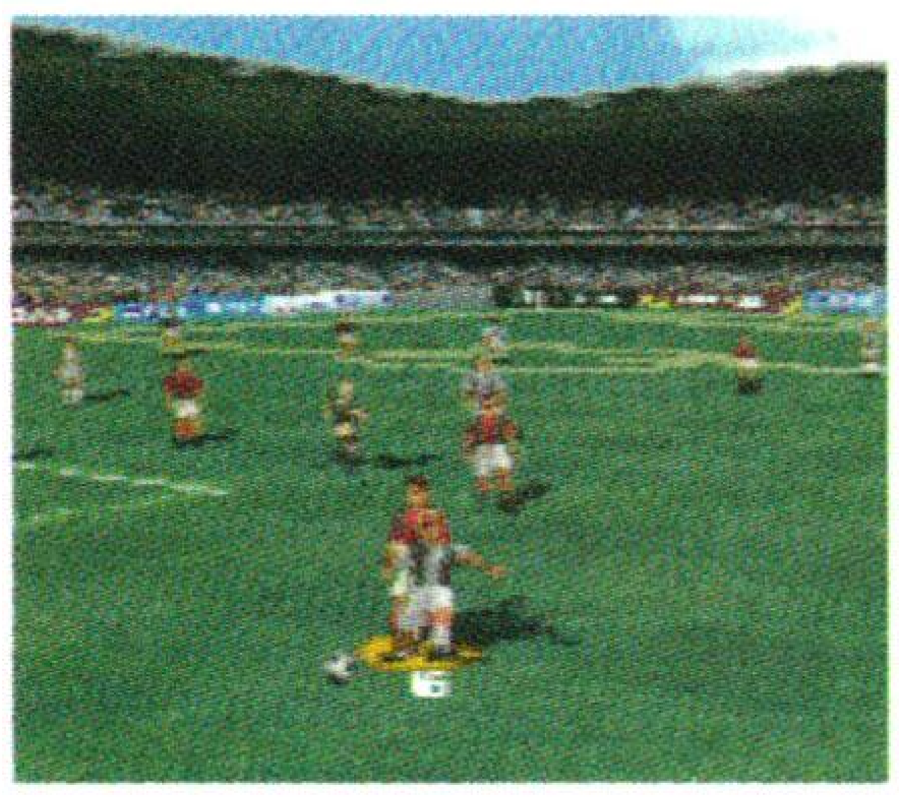
Visually, the game remains pretty close to the other versions and of course, the sound is also the same. The atmospheric crowd noises are excellent and the John Motson commentary is novel to begin with, but soon grows quite tiresome.

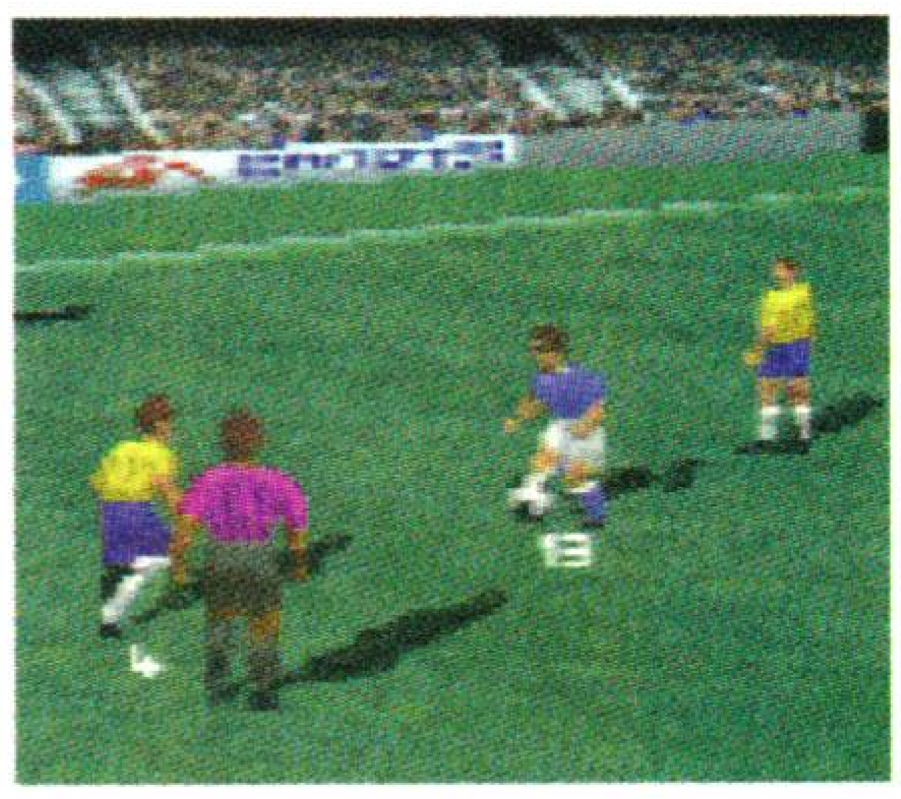
FIFA Soccer is best described as the best of a bad bunch when it comes to Saturn soccer simulations, and **MAXIMUM** is pretty aware that just about everyone in the cosmos has bought the game by now.

However, if you don't own the game, our advice is to wait for the forthcoming Euro '96 game from Sega/Gremlin. In essence, it's the highly rated Actua Soccer tarted up for Saturn and it looks excellent.

★★★

Despite handing in a deep, involved simulation, FIFA Soccer is let down by an average Saturn translation





The New Year usually brings about a severe draught of quality software, but the PlayStation scene this month remains pretty buoyant - and again Sony have the third parties to thank for the good fortunes of their machine. Leading the reviews this month is Capcom's excellent Street Fighter Alpha conversion. This has become something of a **MAXIMUM** favourite, despite the advantages clearly inherent in the Saturn version. This is the kind of game we want to see - truly arcade perfect produce for the Sony machine.

Total NBA also arrives this month, after it has completed its hype circuit on the PlayStation specific magazines. **MAXIMUM** is impressed by the graphics and the overall feel, but the limited nature of the sport limits its overall appeal - Konami's NBA In the Zone has better gameplay mechanics, but suffers from the same faults. Decent graphics or slightly superior gameplay - the choice is yours.

Otherwise, it is something of a quiet month for the PlayStation, with the usual amount of crap produce which slipped from Christmas - the biggest disappointment being the totally unenhanced PSX translation of 3DO Road Rash. Still, enough banter. On with the criticism.

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA

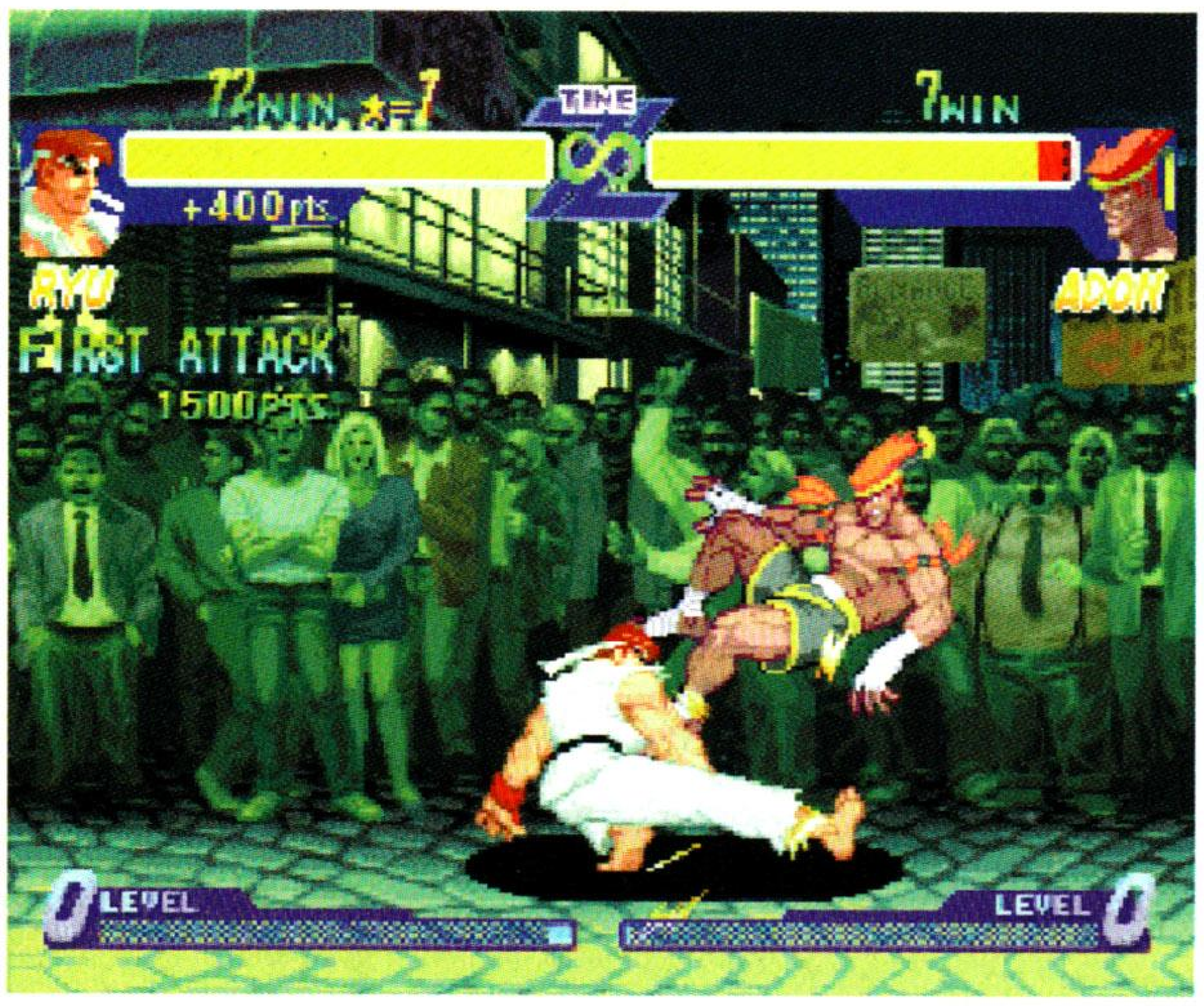
The ultimate arcade conversion hits PlayStation! Alpha is truly arcade-perfect!

In the history of interactive entertainment there are few software developers who can justly claim to have redefined the way we think of and play games. Even now, in the dawn of the 32-bit era, landmark titles are a rare thoroughbred indeed. And although Capcom's Street Fighter Alpha: Warriors' Dreams is certainly not a game that could be described as innovative, it is however, part of a developing series of titles that five years ago redefined what we have come to expect from the 2D beat 'em genre.

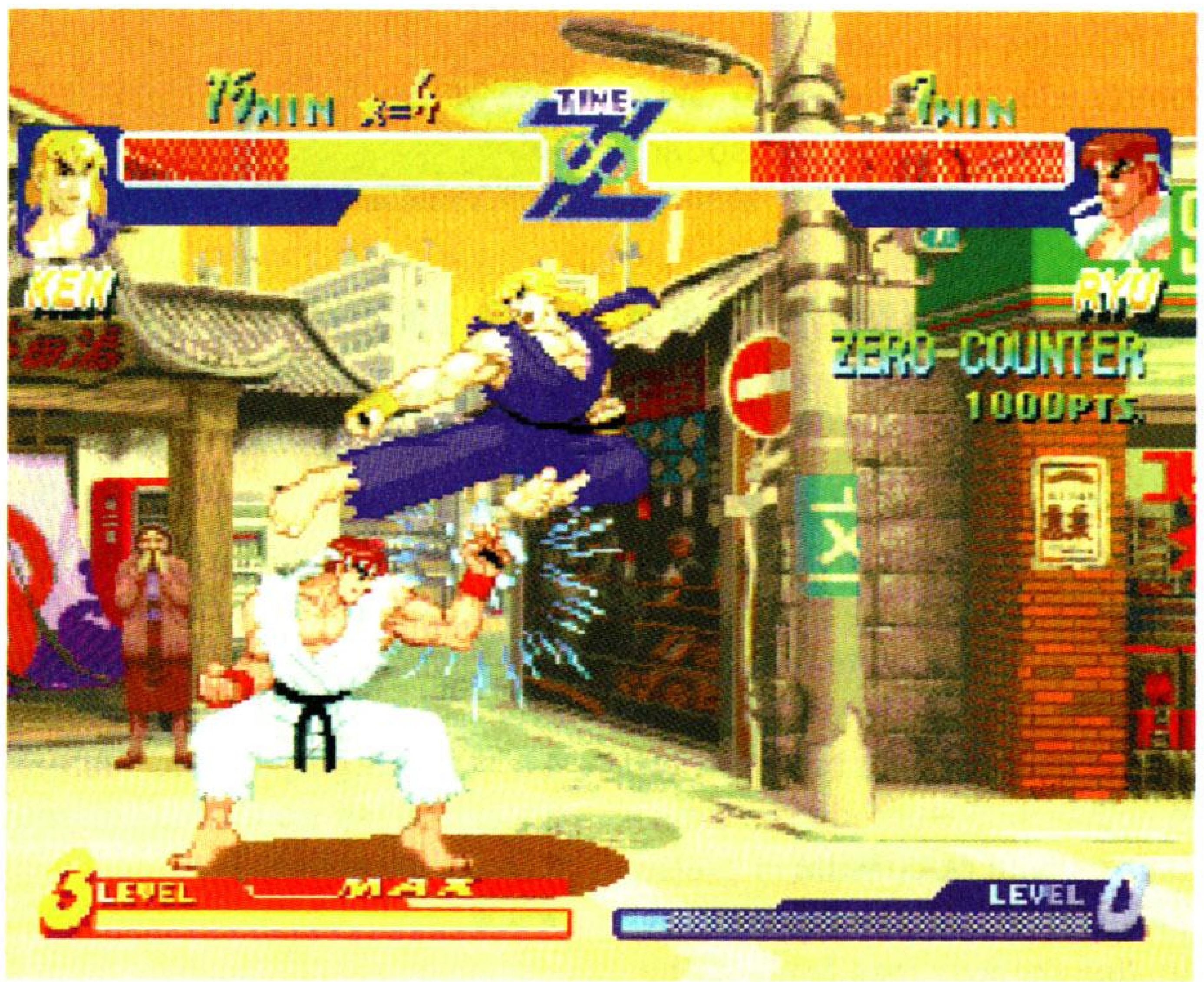
Street Fighter Alpha is the ninth sibling in the popular Street Fighter family, making an average head-count of 1.8 Street Fighters a year since its inception (and that's not counting illegitimate offspring such as X-Men, Marvel Super Heroes, and the DarkStalker twins!). Apart from a few notable stumbling blocks (SF2:The Movie Game, SF2: The Interactive Movie, and some argue, Super SF2) each successive Street Fighter game has been better than the last, riding a seemingly unstoppable wave of popularity from one sequel to the next with Capcom picking up considerable kudos along the way. In its reign as 2D beat 'em up king Street Fighter has hit just about every game platform known to man, picked up an unrivalled cult following, and has come to represent an international standard for measuring videogame proficiency. And now its arrived, in its most recent incarnation, on the PlayStation.

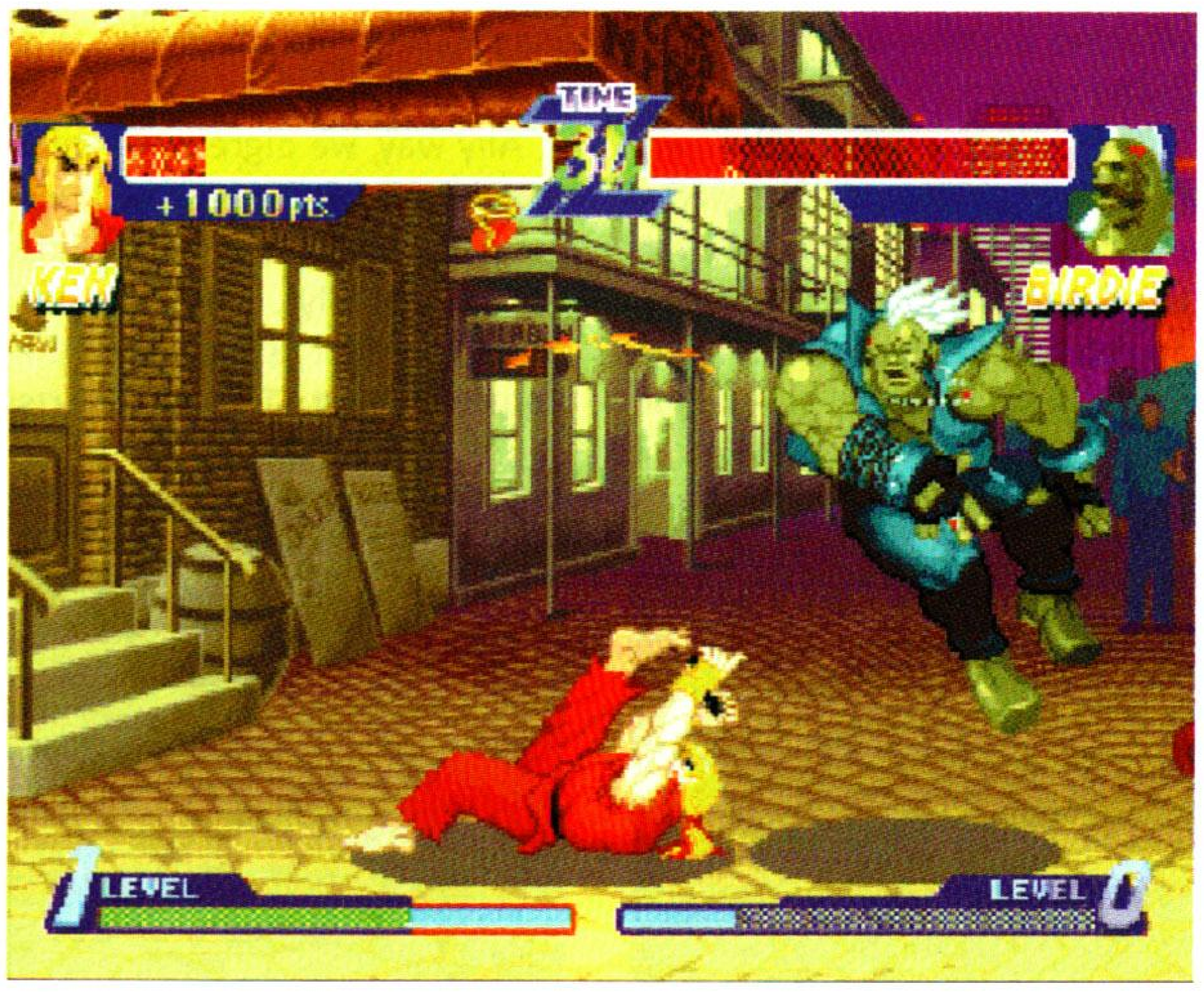
As an arcade conversion Street Fighter Alpha is second to none. For years we've been fed empty promises of arcade-perfect conversions, and now finally the hardware is here to deliver. While perhaps not as convincing proof as something like Tekken, Street Fighter Alpha is nevertheless another shining example of how the gap between arcade originals and home conversions is closing. The differences are negligible. Visually the game sports the same hyper-dynamic anime style that Capcom has been so fond of in its recent coin-ops. The fighters, while less realistic, are more colourful, more dynamic and the animation more fluid than in any previous Street Fighter game (bettering Saturn X-Men), and perfectly match the accompanying promotional character artwork. Though the dreaded 'border-syndrome' rears its ugly head on the PAL version, it is by and large irrelevant, and players will learn to ignore it within a few minutes play. The speed remains identical to the arcade and NTSC original.

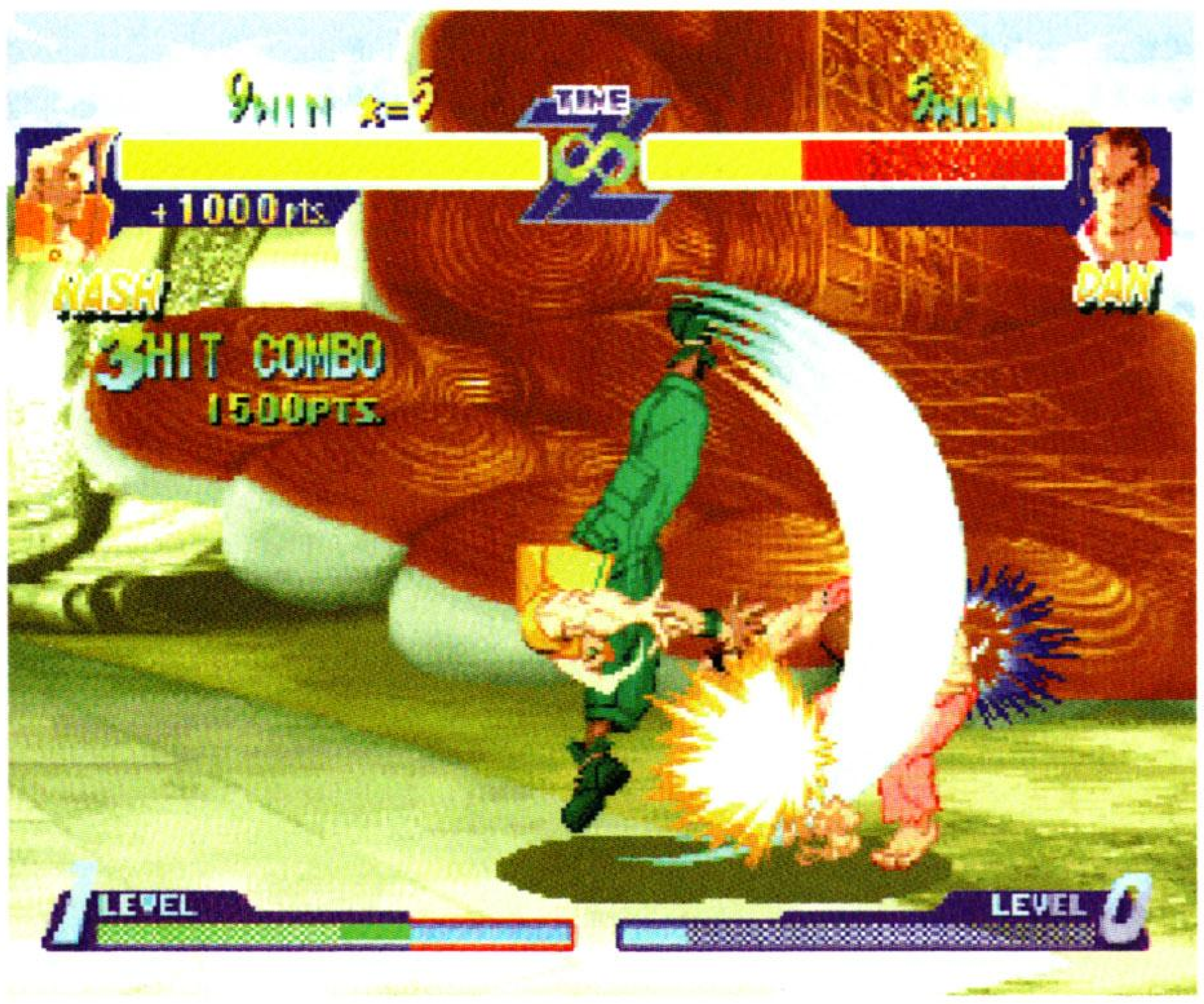
It's good news in the audio department too. The sounds and samples are crisp and clear ('Shoryuken" never sounded so good!), with big hits producing suitably bass reverberating results. The music's good too,

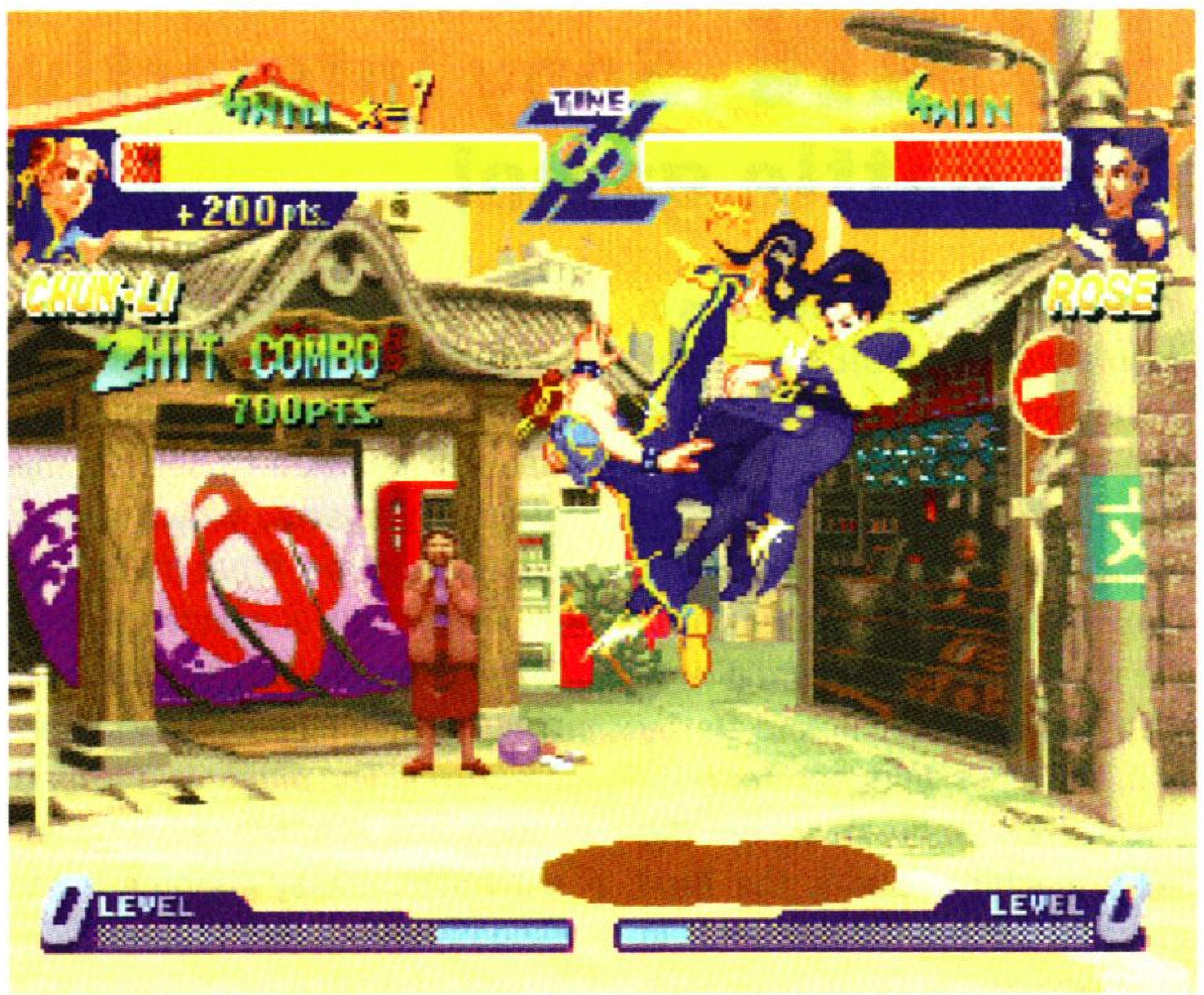


CAPCOM IMMEDIATELY ESTABLISH EXECLLENT PLAYSTATION REPUTATION! EVERY SINGLE FRAME OF ANIMATION MAKES ITS WAY ACROSS ONTO THE SONY MACHINE!



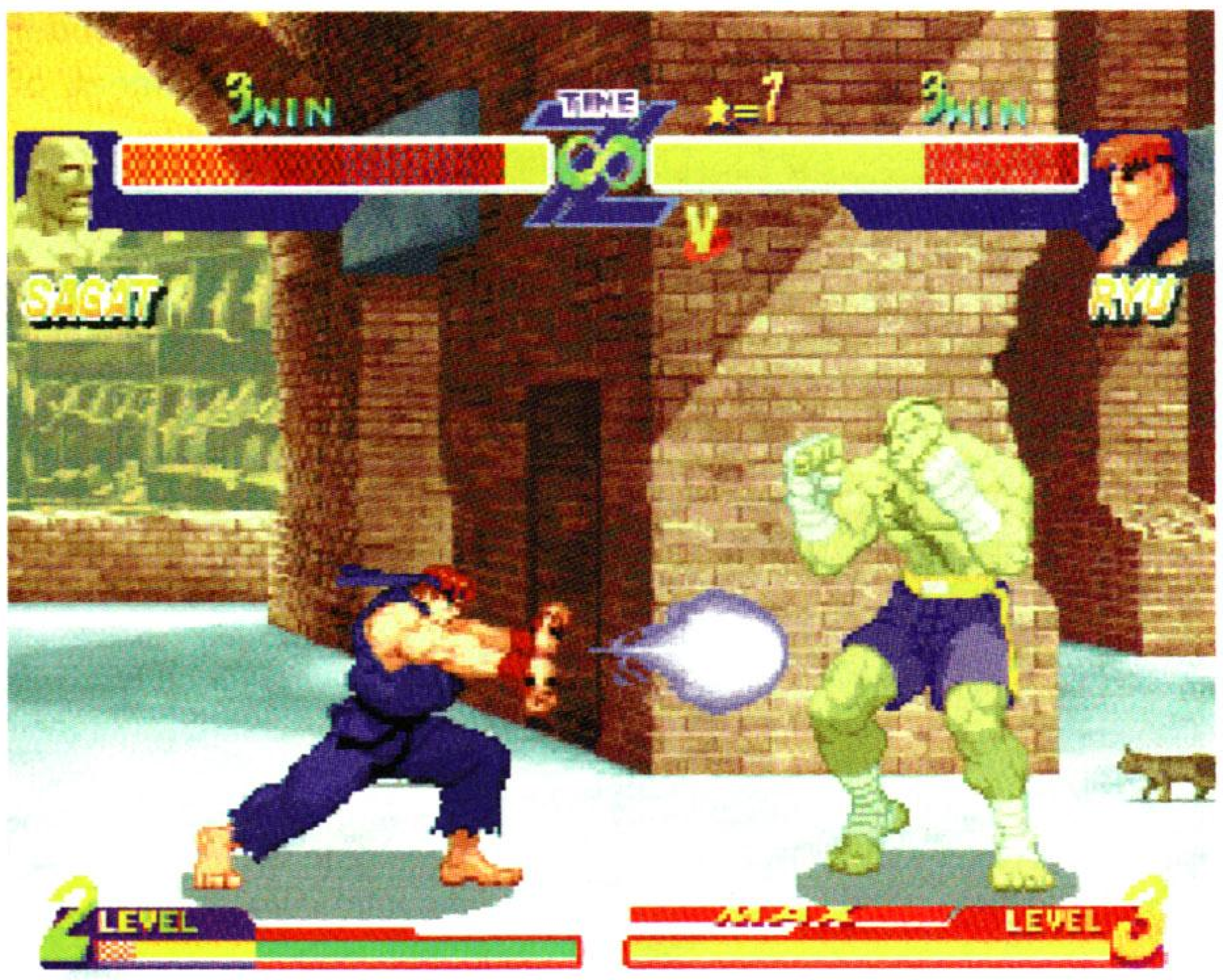




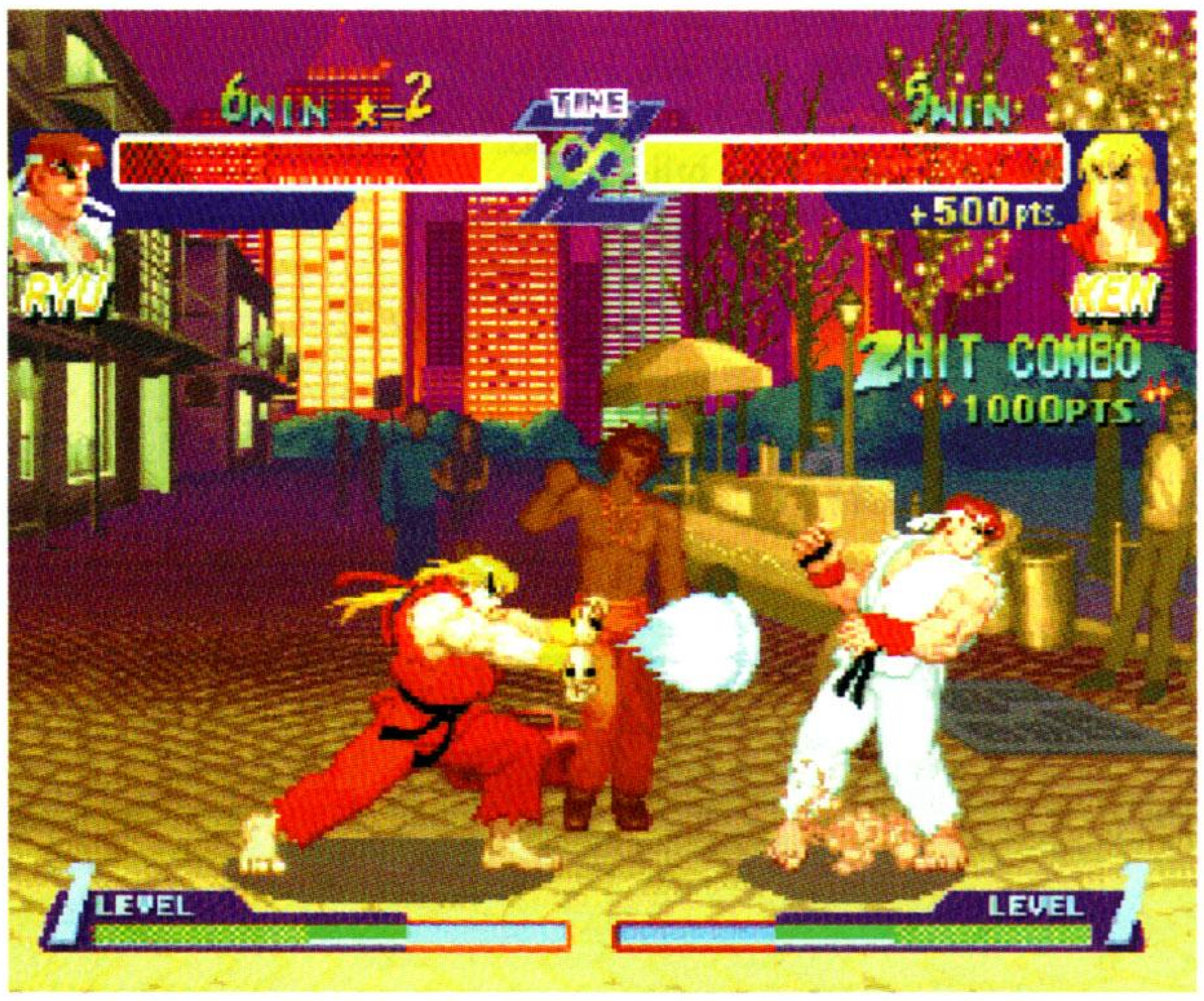


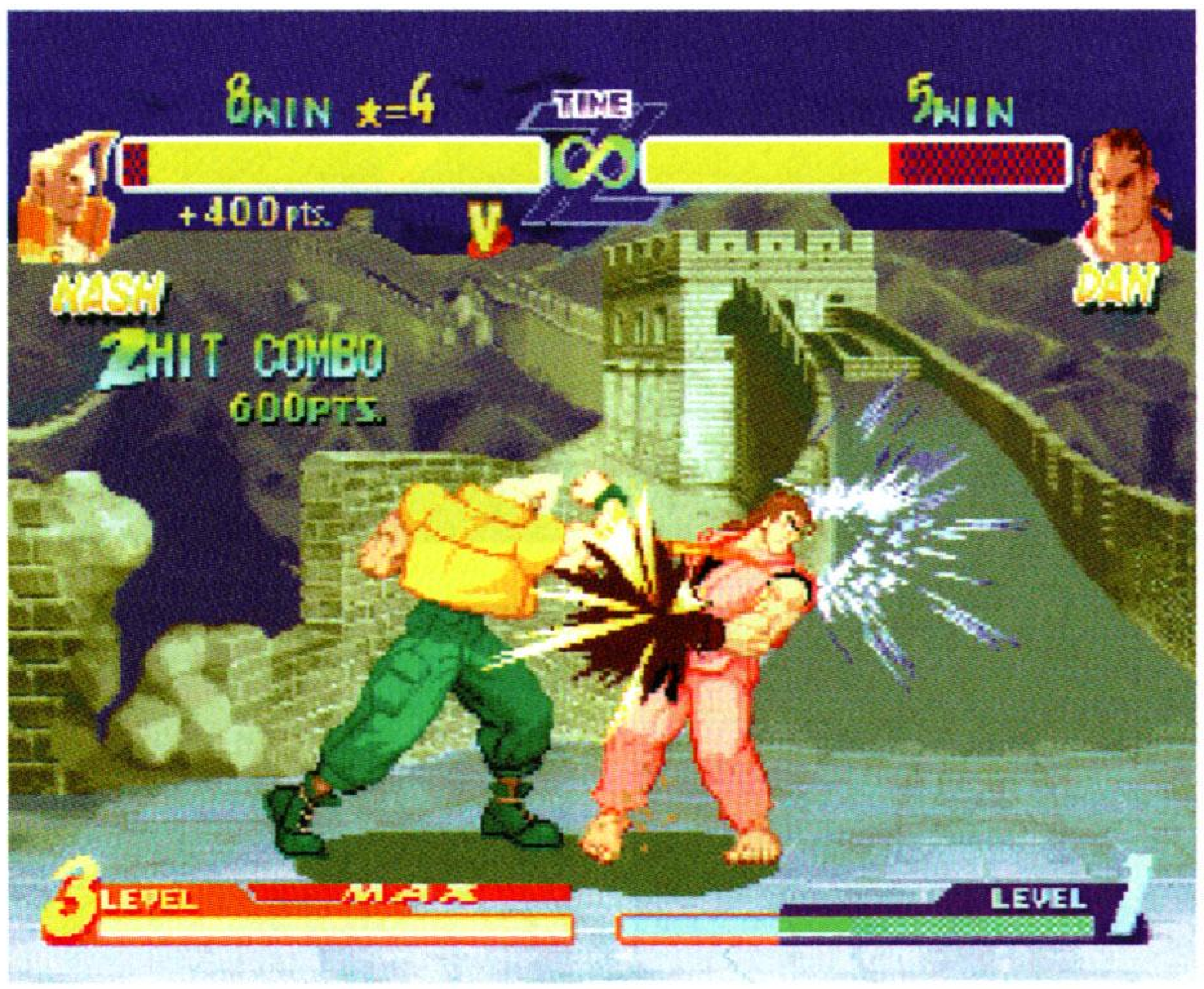
Capcom annihilate the opposition with the best sprite-based combat game on PlayStation!

Excellent sprites and backdrops in the distinctive Capcom style!



with a fine selection of tunes pumping away in the background, catchy, yet unobtrusive - as they should be in a beat 'em up. Fans of the arcade will appreciate the option to choose between either the CD remixed version, or the originals, and true Capcom devotees will notice a lot of the scores have been lifted from the original Final Fight arcade game.





Predictably, Street Fighter Alpha also plays like a warrior's dream. The fights are fast and furious whilst at the same time allowing for pixel-perfect control. The joy of Street Fighter is the level of depth the mechanics afford. Beginners can bash away at the pads and enjoy the accompanying visual spectacle while experts will appreciate the surgical precision of the hit detection and move prerogative. Street Fighter Alpha operates an unparalleled investment/reward scheme. The scope for improvement from beginning to master is vast, and the more you play it, the better you get - it's simple as that.

Street Fighter Alpha can also be seen as a rebuke to developers like SNK who have borrowed (albeit to good use!) so many ideas from Capcom's original beat 'em up formula, that they decided it was time to steal some of their best ideas back. So, 'new' to Alpha is a revamped super-combo system which allows for easier combos for beginners and greater potential for experts, Alpha-counters, a beginner mode to give Street Fighter virgins (if there is such a thing) a chance against more experienced players, along with the usual compliment of new fighters, each with their own different playing styles and endings - exaggerated in Alpha to create a real sense of character involvement and thus enrich the whole one player experience.

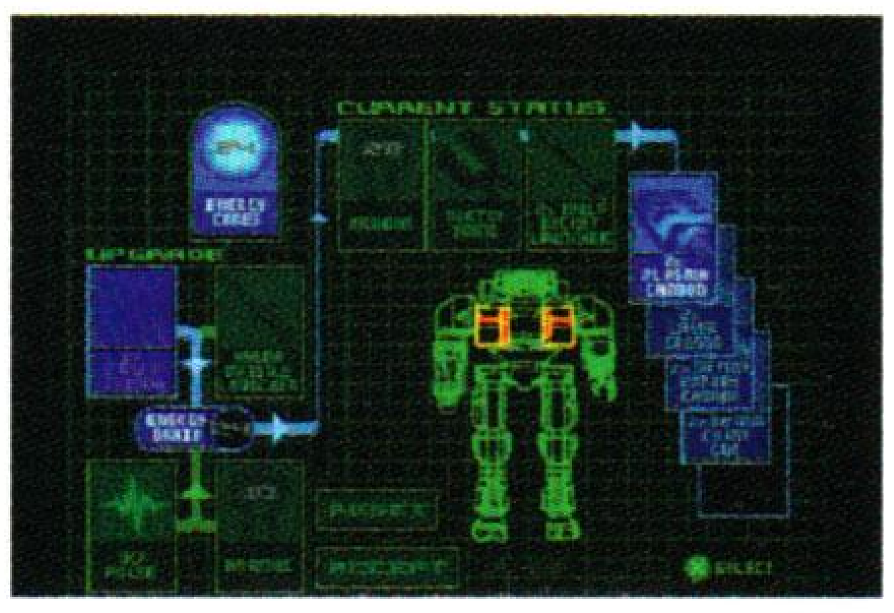
If I had to find fault with Street Fighter Alpha it would be that firstly, the sheer enormity and spectacle of the on screen chaos is detracts from the precision of the gameplay (though this really is a case of personal preference); secondly, the loading time between fights, though nominal, is noticeable; and thirdly, the game shows a worrying lack of innovation. Each successful Street Fighter upgrade has undeniably contained worthwhile game play additions, but the fact is the central game mechanics haven't actually strayed that far from the original Street Fighter 2. Capcom are clearly firm believers in the motto: 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it'. At worst Street Fighter Alpha can be seen as a collection of features from innumerable other beat 'em sources all put to good effect in one game.

But that's all irrelevant. If you're a beat 'em up fan the chances are you'd made up your mind about Street Fighter Alpha as soon as you saw five stars and the phrase 'arcade-perfect'. And if you're not a beat 'em up fan, grow up. You should be.

Street Fighter Alpha is the next logical evolvement of the most popular fighting game of all time. In **MAXIMUM**'s opinion it is one of the greatest marriages of presentation and gameplay yet seen on any format, and there isn't really any other 2D beat 'em up on the PlayStation that can touch it. The words 'must' and 'buy' spring immediately to mind, but be prepared, however, for some rather painful thumb shredding if you're intent on using the official Sony pad for any significant amount of time. ★★★★★

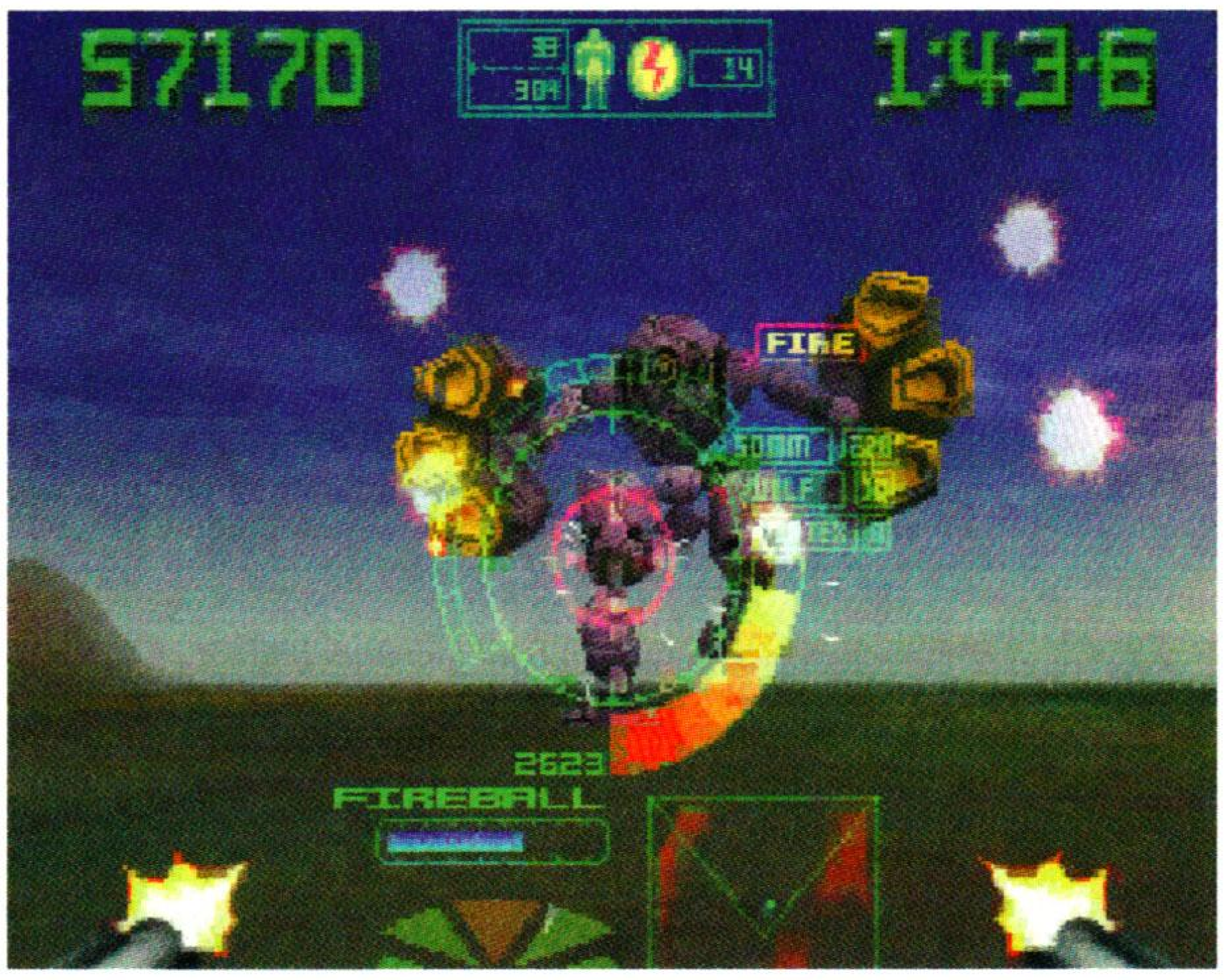
KRAZY IVAN

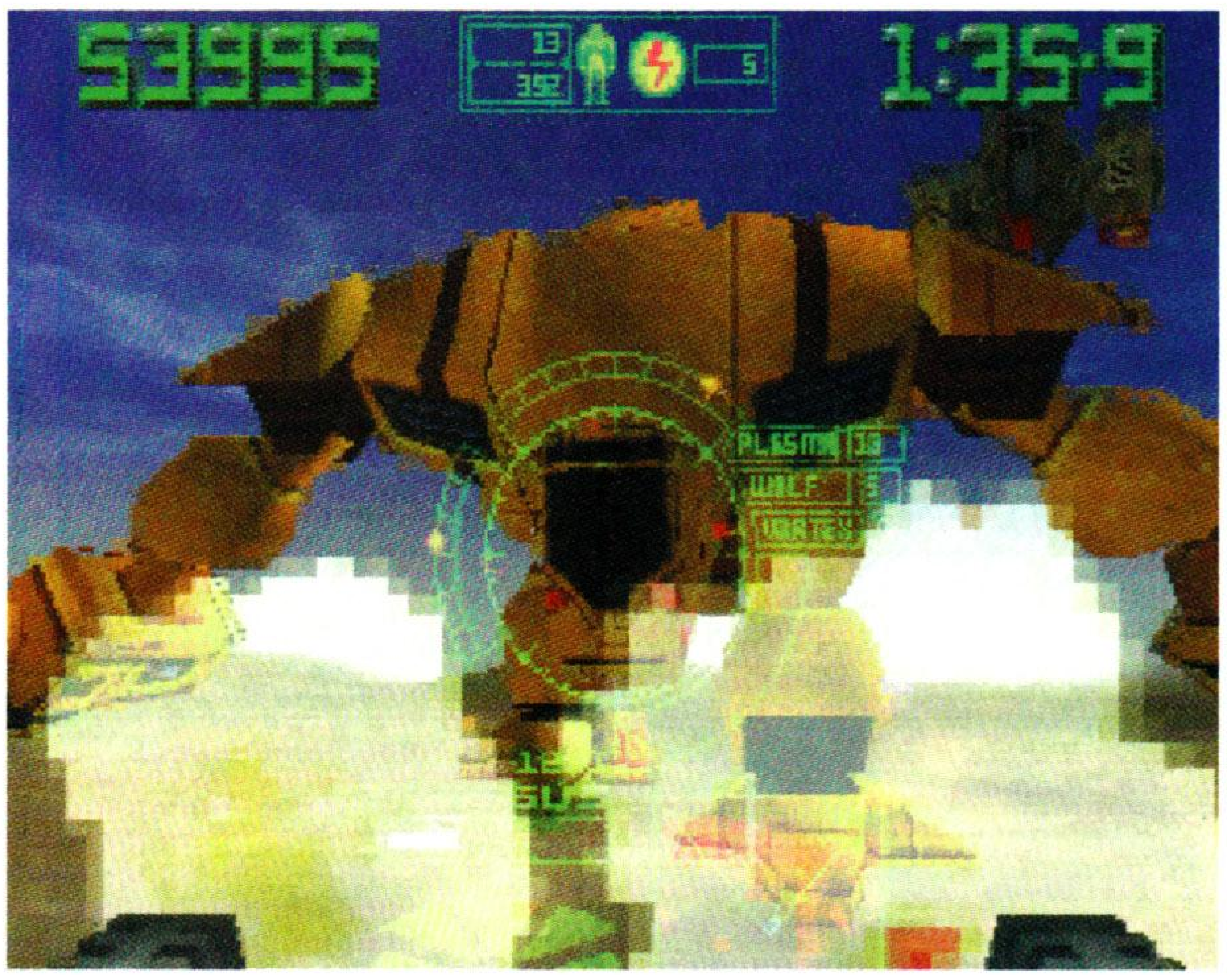
Sony Interactive finally unleash their much-hyped robot battle game!



When the PlayStation was in its infancy, one of SIE's key titles in development was the impressive-looking Krazy Ivan. Said to star huge robots battling each other and maximising the PlayStation's 3D capabilities, the game was billed as the next step up from Destruction Derby and WipeOut and set to reinforce SIE's supremacy on the Sony machine. Sadly, the final game is far too limited and, in all honesty, suffers from the perennial problem of presentation over playability.

A superb rendered intro sets the scene as Ivan is revealed to be a human psycho encased in he latest state-of-the-art robotic armour. With the world under siege from an assortment of equally powerful robots, Ivan's psychotic nature has been conveniently forgotten and he's been dispatched to see off the alien aggressors. Which brings us to the game. What there is of it. Krazy Ivan is reminiscent of Treasure's Megadrive titles in that it relies heavily on its boss creatures. The player is dropped into a free scrolling 3D location with SIE's classy clipping occasionally giving way to some horrendous glitching. Via Ivan's info screens the location of the game's bosses is marked and the player's basic aim is to blow these to kingdom come. However, in order to get there, first the uneven terrain must be traversed, and then a series of smaller robots blown to smithereens. But the bosses are the meat of the game and this is ultimately Krazy Ivan's downfall.



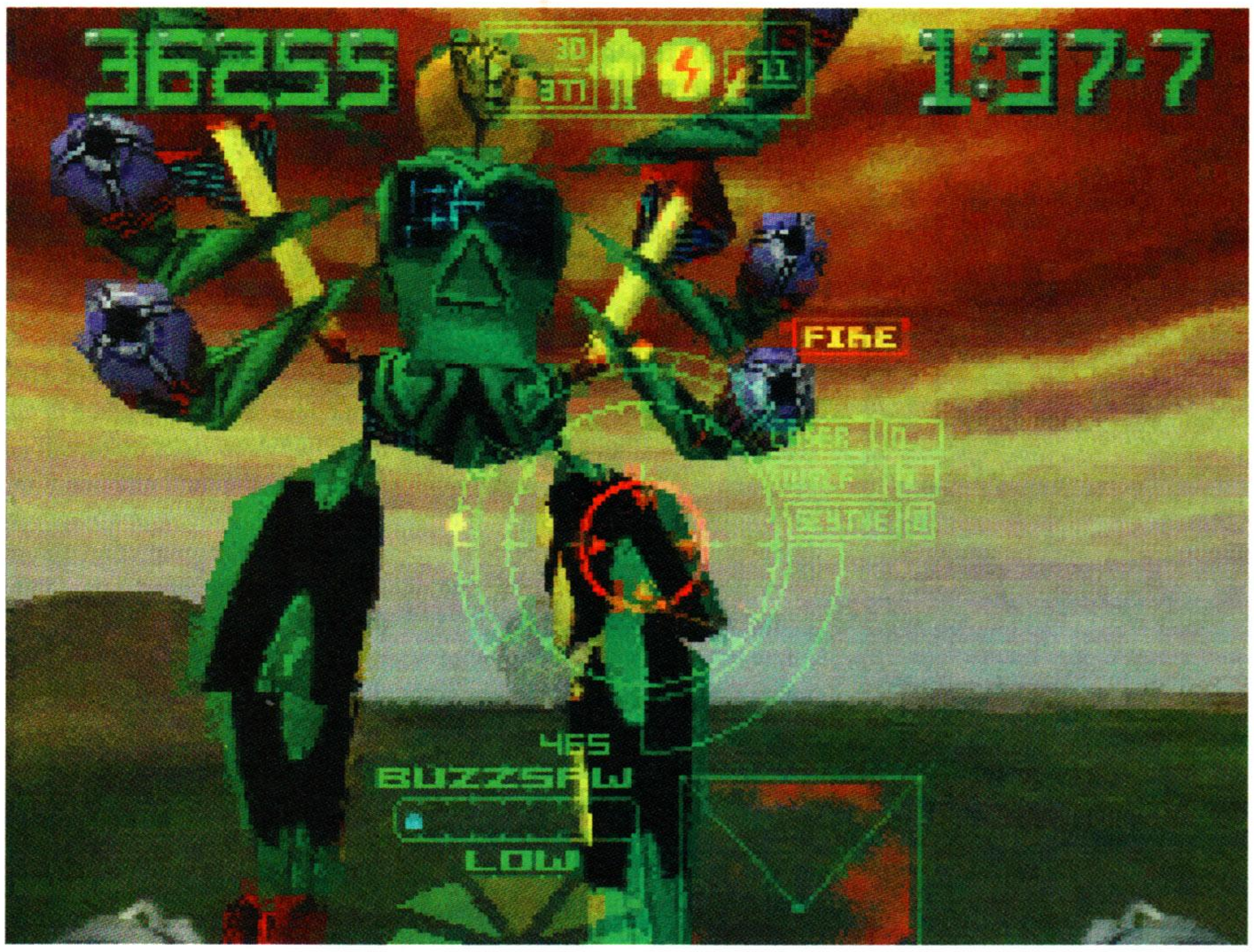


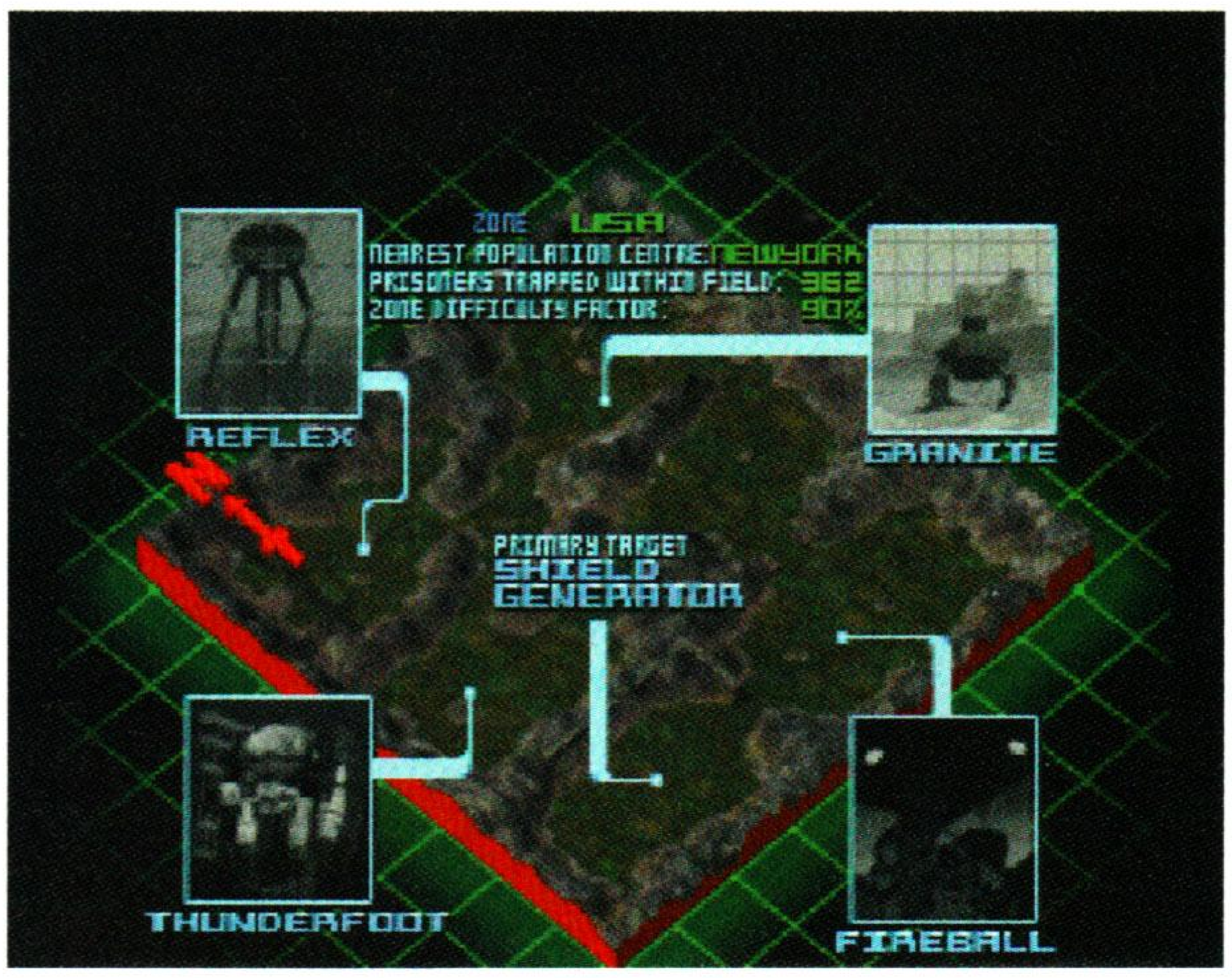
As these larger sprites are the main force behind the invasion, all the player has to do is locate the said colossus and blow it up. Any altercations with the smaller creatures is unnecessary and only recommended if extra weapons are needed - which is rarely. Ordinarily, this would be fine as the bosses should offer a huge challenge being as they are the bulk of the game. Sadly, anyone familiar with Doom and its sidestepping motion will have Krazy Ivan over a barrel. It soon becomes apparent that by sidestepping the bosses' fire whilst unleashing whatever weapons you have to hand, they soon fall to your superior tactics. Every time. This is a real pity as some of them are superbly realised, but their attempts of attack are ultimately futile. Which is a brilliant summing up of this disappointing title.

★★

NO CRITICISM CAN BE LEVELLED AT THE SUPERLATIVE VISUALS

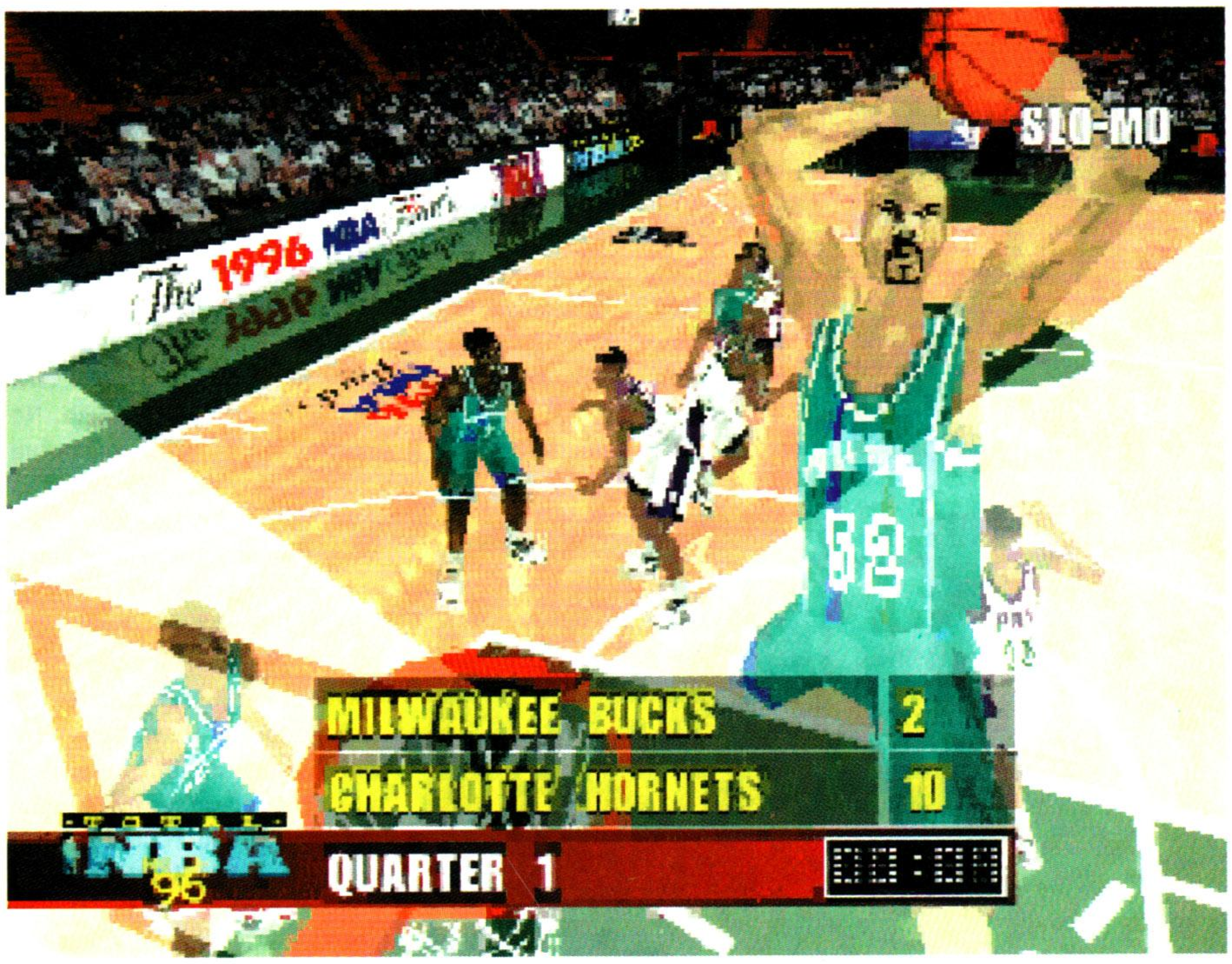
KRAZY IVAN IMMEDIATELY IMPRESSES WITH ITS EXCELLENT AUDIO-VISUALS. UNFORTUNATELY, IT LACKS NECESSARY DEPTH IN THE GAMEPLAY DEPARTMENT




ZONE USA
NEAREST POPULATION CENTRE NEWYORK
PRISONERS TRAPPED WITHIN FIELD: 362
ZONE DIFFICULTY FACTOR: 90%
PRIMARY TARGET SHIELD GENERATOR

TOTAL NBA

A technically incredible PlayStation extravaganza, but does it have the necessary longevity?



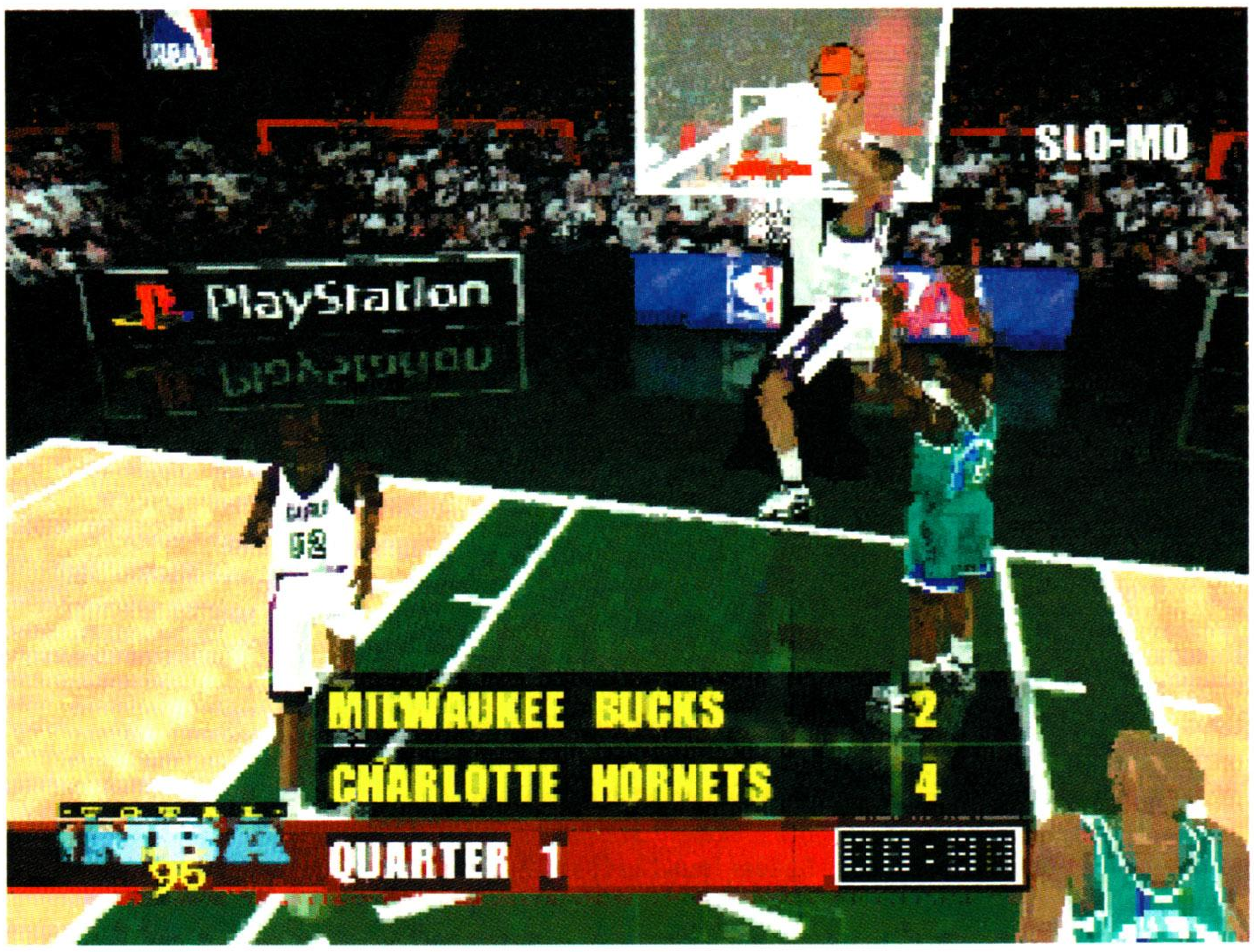
Basketball only really gained a following on these shores when Acclaim's NBA Jam appeared in a blaze of glory. Now, however, Sony themselves are stepping up for some hoop action - with the first game to emerge from their UK development team. Everything in Total NBA is geared to realism, with the player offered anyone of forty-odd teams from the current NBA roster, in a series of tournaments, on-off friendlies, or league games. The presentation throughout is impeccable, with the teams shown using digitised pictures, offering individual statistics, and allowing the player to determine strategies from these. More impressive, however, are the actual game aesthetics.

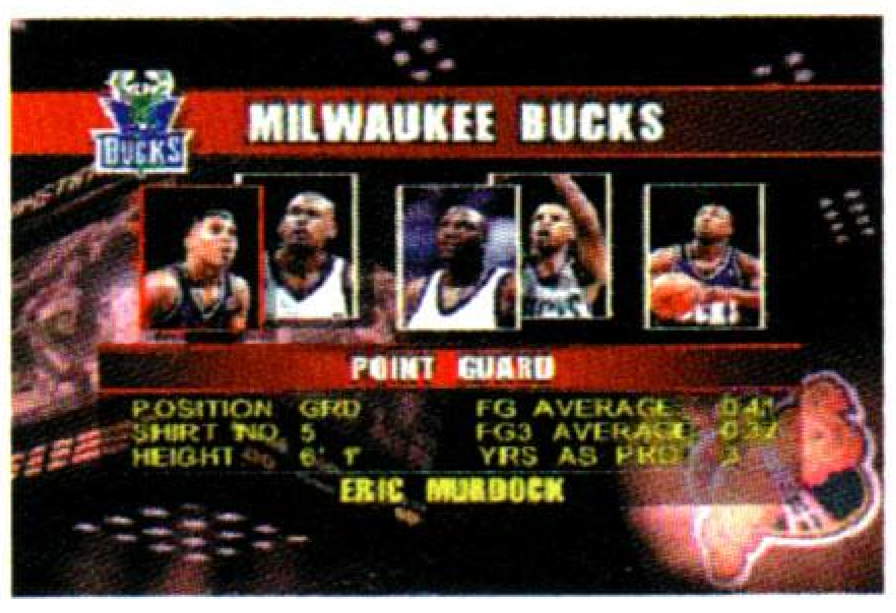
GOING HEAD-TO-HEAD WITH KONAMI'S NBA IN THE ZONE, TOTAL NBA IS CLEARLY THE SUPERIOR GAME IN THE GRAPHICAL STAKES - BUT WHERE DOES IT STAND ON THE GAMEPLAY?

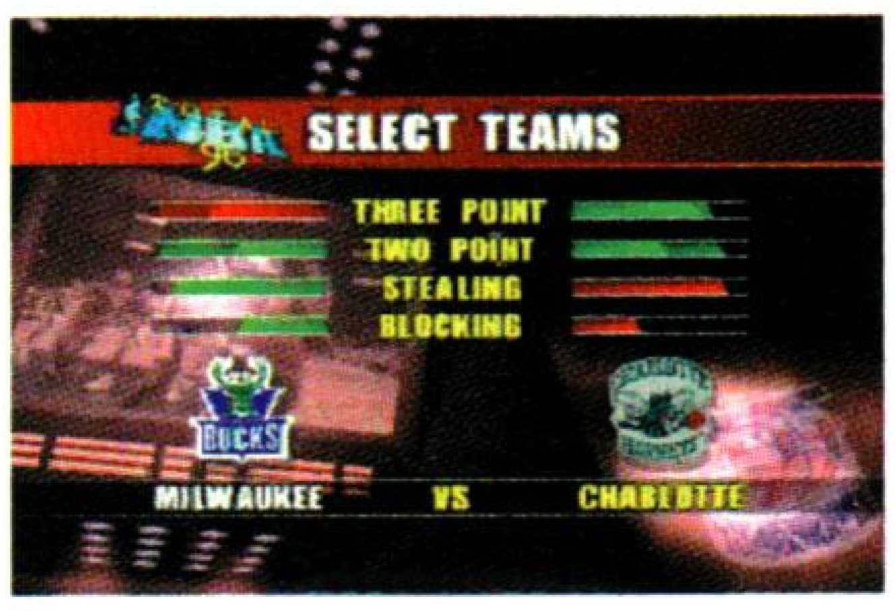
As soon as the players run on the court it's hard not to be impressed. Not only do the individual players resemble their team photos when viewed up close, but there are other details and touches which also make you look twice. For example, as the players scoot around the assorted court surfaces, you can actually see their feet and legs reflected in the polished wooden floor! Play is incredibly simple but comprehensive, with the four buttons used to effect short and long passes, slam dunks and long shots. The benefit of such simplicity is that it allows the player to string together short, fast play and pull off incredible shots and dunks with ease. Even better, though, is that your greatest moments of glory can then replayed from a variety of close angles so you can even see the players hanging off the hoop or falling backwards. This stunning attention-to-detail raises Total NBA above many of its rivals, but in the end the game is let down by the simplicity of the real thing.

NBA Jam needed to liven the basic sport up by adding power-ups and the like, and this helped pace a game that otherwise was a dull end-to-end affair. While Total NBA is to be admired for its realism, it doesn't aid its longevity and we soon found ourselves getting a little bored of blocking, making runs and last-gasp shots. Admittedly, this is no fault of the programmers of Total NBA, but we feel only die-hard fans of the Shaq pack will persevere with this.

★★★







The most eagerly awaited PlayStation titles currently anticipated in the **MAXIMUM** offices can be found in this chart...

1. TEKKEN 2
Three words for our beloved readership: "next month's issue".

2. FORMULA ONE
SIE's incredible racing game looks the business and promises to be one of the greatest road racers ever!

3. RESIDENT EVIL
Expect to see the full low-down on this incredible title in **MAXIMUM** issue #6. Mark our words: this is going to be an incredible game.

4. JUMPING FLASH 2
Another eagerly awaited title. The first Flash was about as difficult to finish as putting on a hat. Let's hope for more challenge in the sequel.

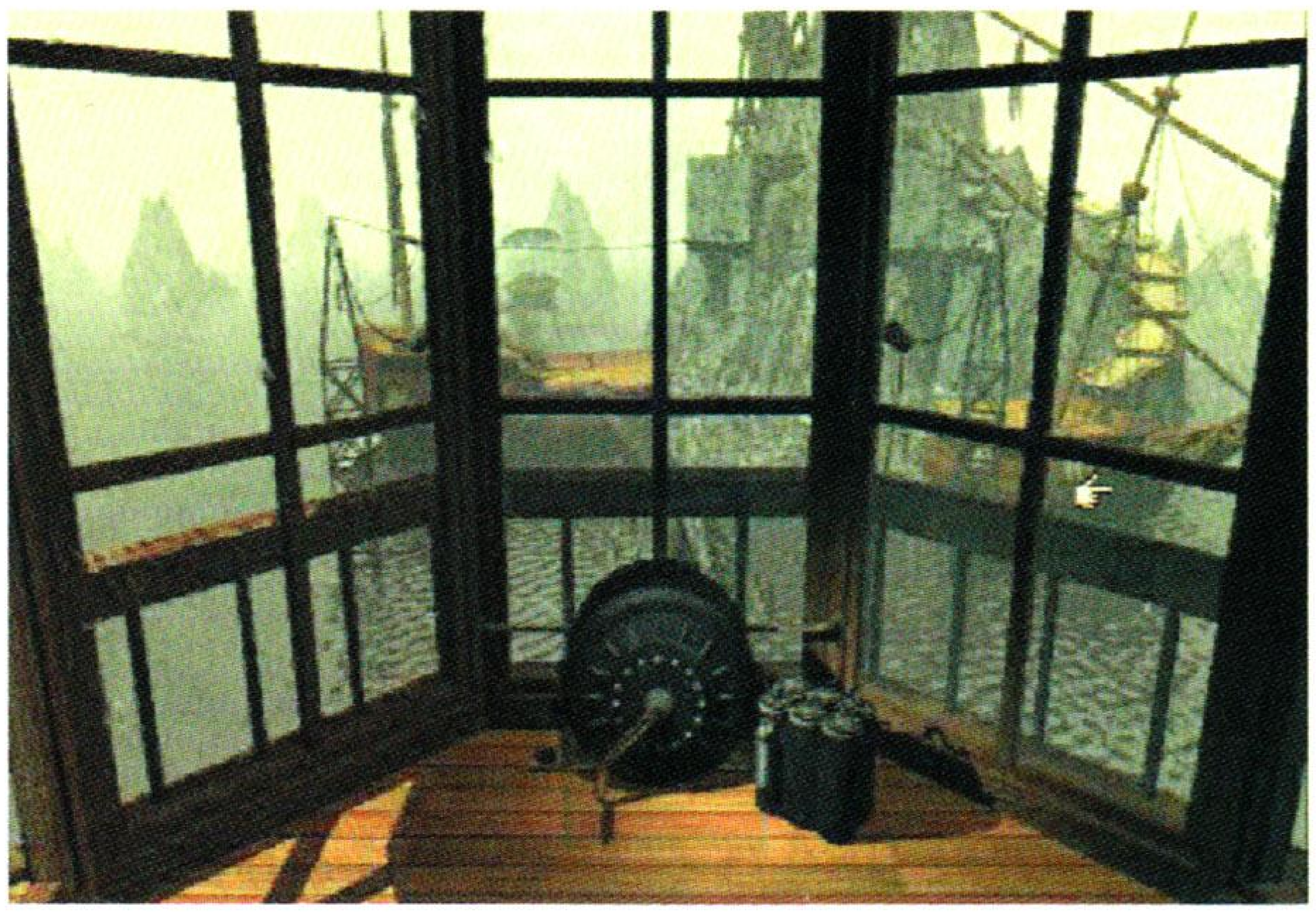
5. X-MEN
This game being Saturn-only works so well for Sega, but a conversion for the Sony machine is being prepped - but by licensors Acclaim, not Capcom.

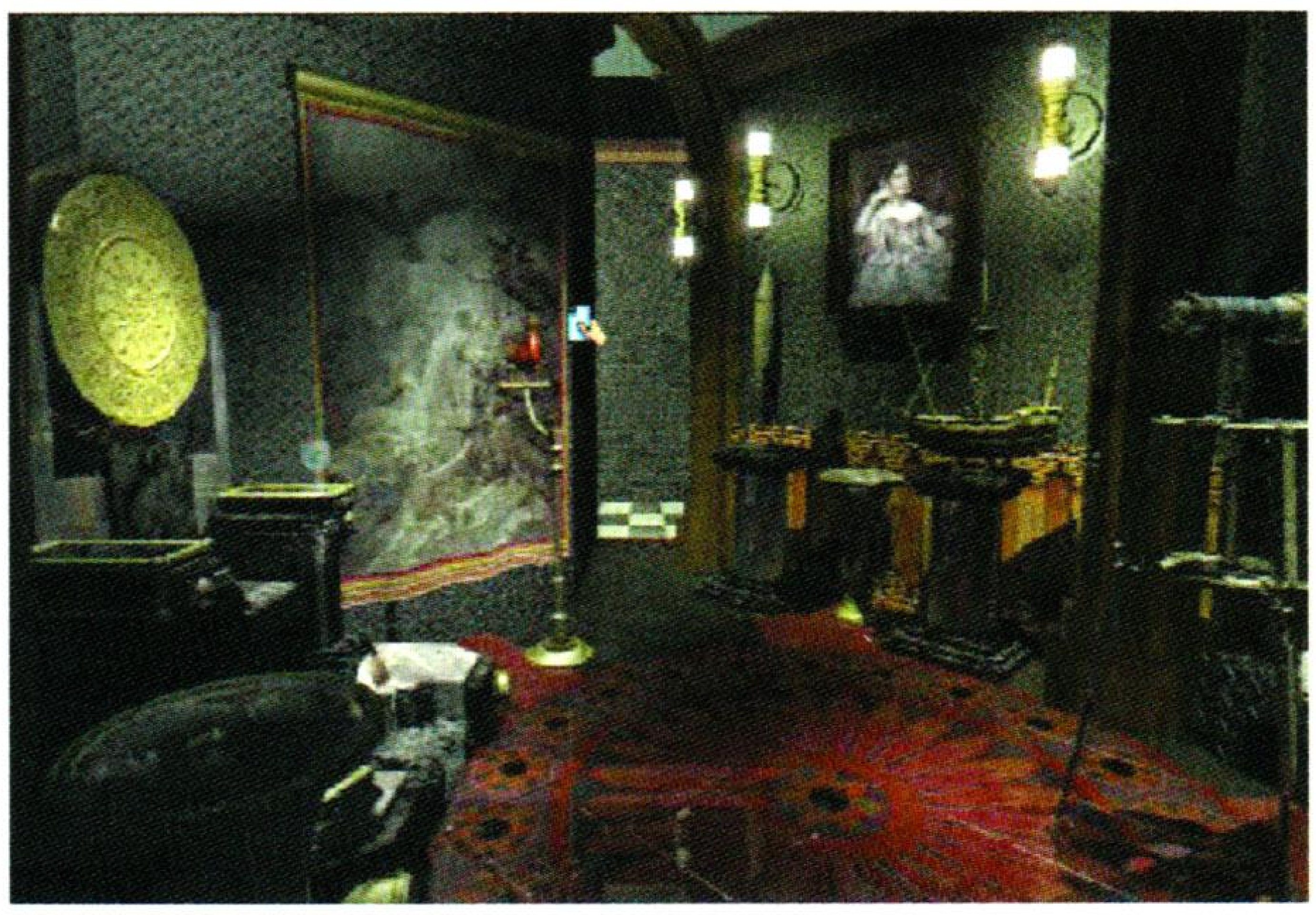
CHART COMPILED BY **MAXIMUM**

MYST

The most converted CD product in history finally arrives on Sony PlayStation, but was it worth the effort?

A veteran of every format with a CD drive, Myst finally crawls on to the PlayStation, courtesy of SIE. Cyan's off-beat puzzler has had Mac, PC, Saturn and 3DO owners scratching their heads for several years now, and its popularity has inspired a sequel which is set for a late 1997 release. But, behind all the hype, is Myst actually any good? Well, sort of. To look at, Myst is a very dull game indeed. While the graphics are high-res depictions of forests, wooden space rockets, and summer houses (with a strange rippling effect we haven't seen since the earliest Amiga interlacing demos), they don't actually move and the player's control limited to pressing a few objects using the icon provided.



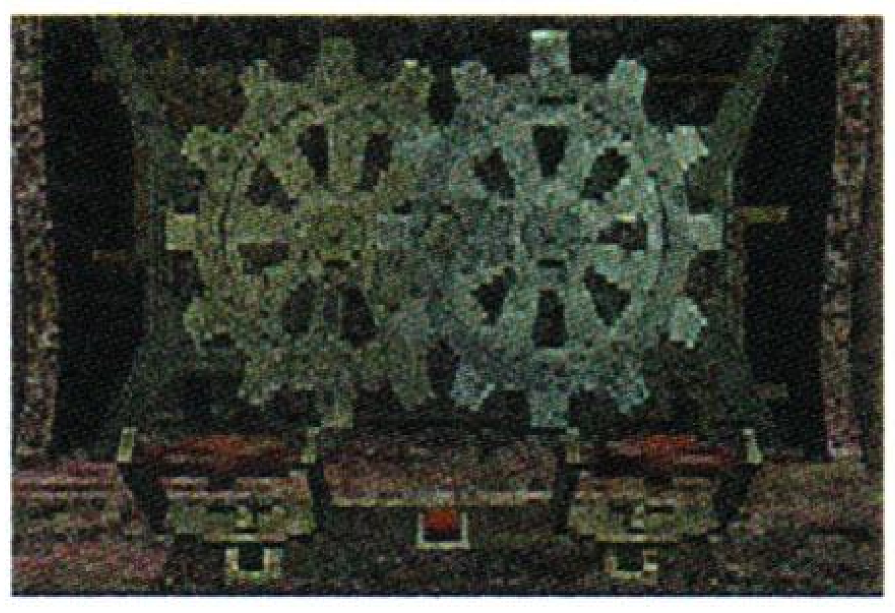


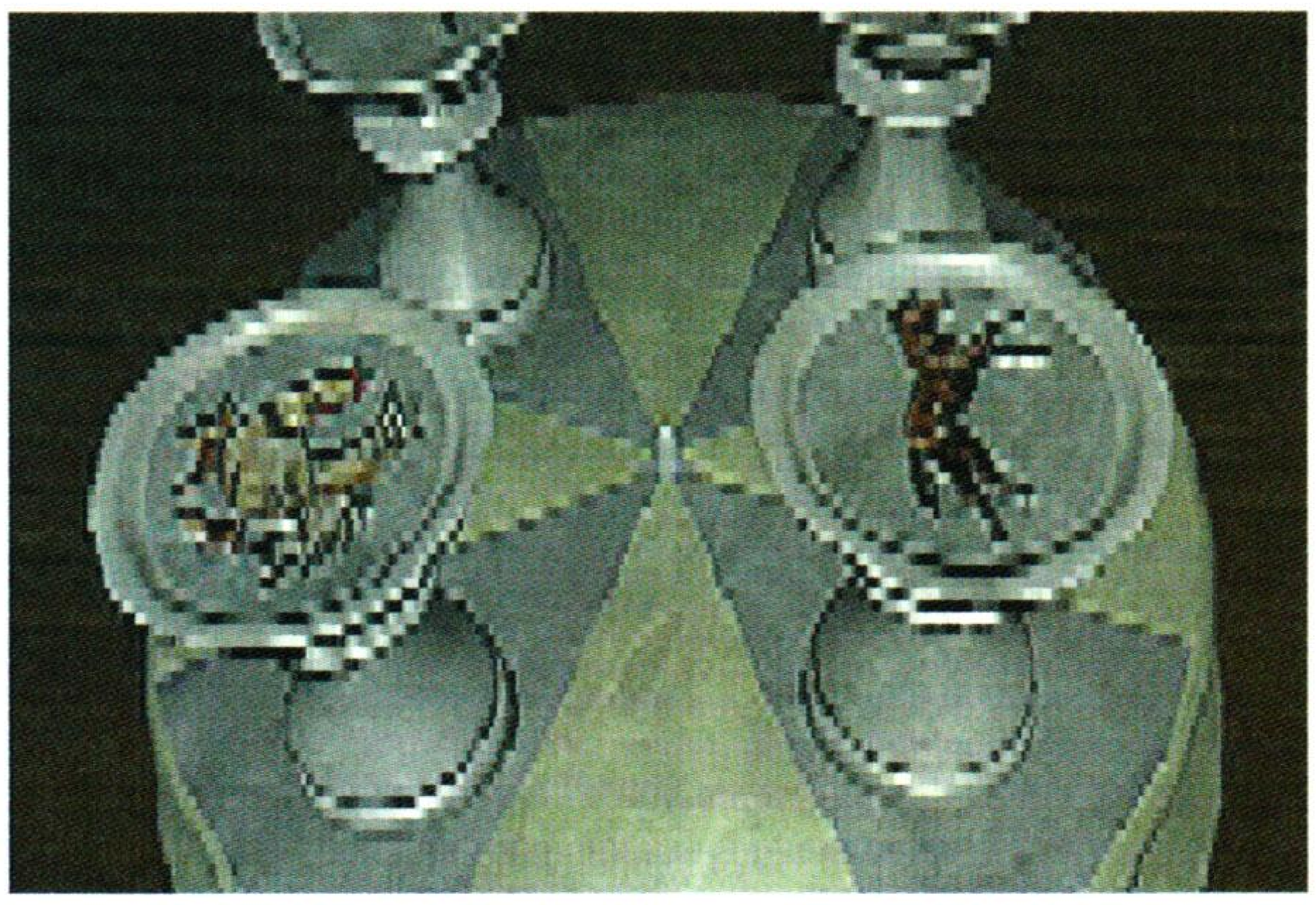
Naturally enough, Myst is a puzzle from start to finish. No information is given regarding the plot, instead the player is dropped on the side of a dock having apparently just regained consciousness. Using the said icon to move from one flick-screen to another, at first the player is left just to wander the strange locale. However, after a while secrets are uncovered and a plot of good versus evil and the recovery of important books in unveiled - and Myst (at last) grabs the player by the throat. After a while, extra clues see the player launching a rocket, solving a puzzle regarding a model boat, and having to choose between the two brothers that eventually form the last puzzles of the game. The only trouble with Myst, however, is that for the most part the player is left in the dark for far too long. While it is very satisfying to press a button and watch something happen, initially play is limited to pressing everything and seeing if anything happens. The PlayStation also plays host to a number of more interesting puzzle games - D and King's Field spring to mind - and ultimately, we doubt if the average Sony owner will be bothered to escape the island, regardless of Myst's previous pedigree.

★★

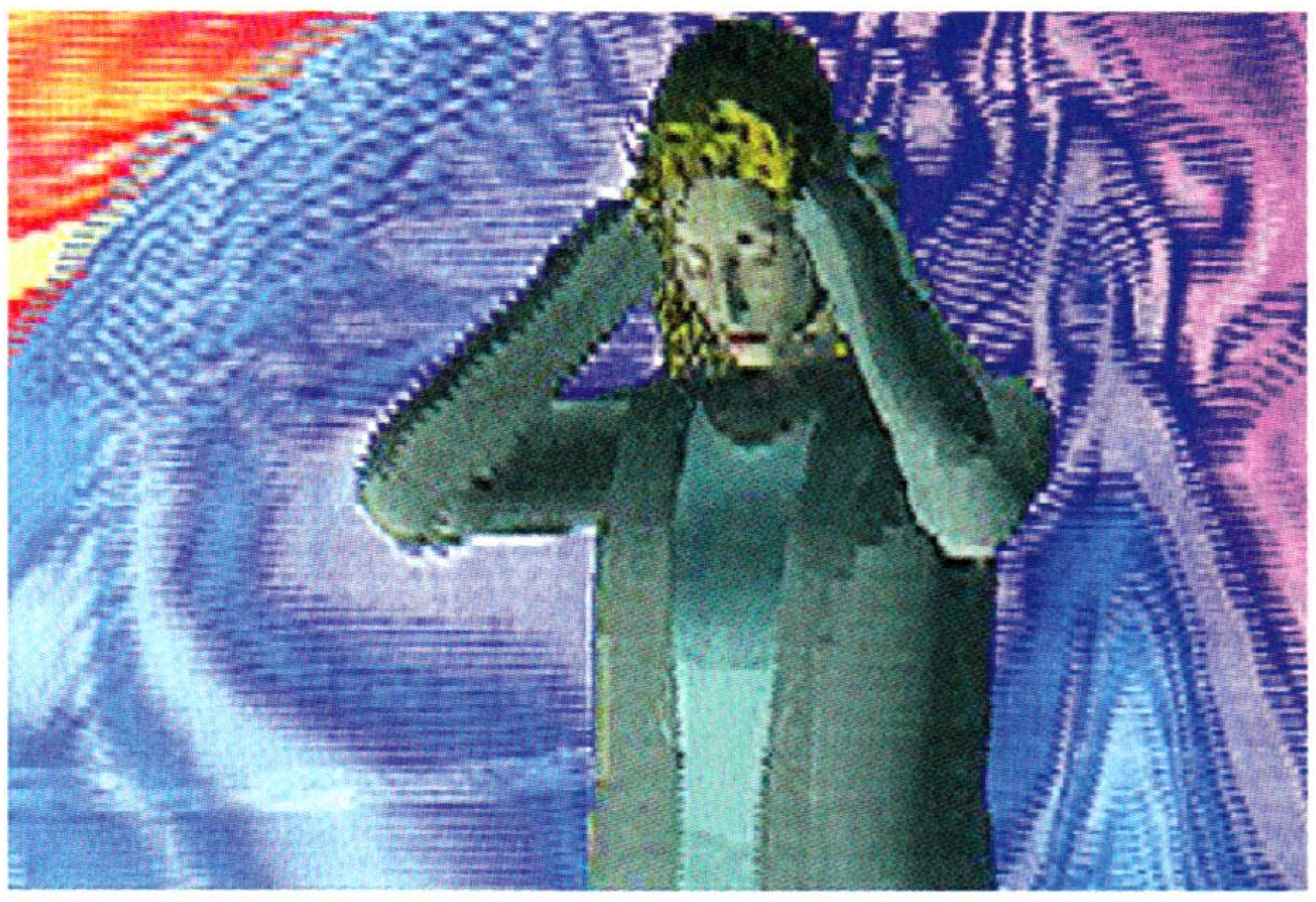
D

Acclaim reveal their first PlayStation adventure





Stepping away from their licensed properties for a while, Acclaim have teamed up with Warp to unveil one of the most graphically stunning adventures seen to date. The year is 1998 and a renowned Doctor has apparently gone mad, slaying everyone in the hospital where he works. His daughter, Laura, receives the call that she is needed at the hospital as she is the only person her deranged dad is likely to listen to, and bravely steps into the building to search for her unhinged parent. This is all related via a rather stunning intro wherein a rendered Laura enters the building and cutaway shots show dead people littering the building like an episode of Casualty. What's more impressive, though, is that once the intro ends and the game itself begins, there is no discernible difference between the two. Every room Laura explores is depicted in true 3D and fully detailed - from every possible angle. Similarly, keeping with the movie-like presentation, the user is treated to close-ups and long shots to heighten the tension when entering a room.



The plot unravels as soon as Laura enters the building. Via a series of flashbacks and cut scenes, we see that her father has been possessed by some sort of demon and that he is actually locked away in a mansion in another dimension. Walking into what appears to be the same Stargate James Spader found in the film of the same name, she finds herself in the building, and the true mission begins. D aims to shock, and Acclaim are pitching it as a horror movie for your PlayStation. This is true to an extent and we see numerous impaled bodies, creepy flashbacks and stabbing scenes, but the graphics are so dark (no emphasise the moodiness, naturally), that a lot of the effect is lost. Similarly, another problem with D is that its puzzles are too simple and longevity is only added by making Laura walk extremely slowly! The programmers have set the game in real time and given the user a two-hour time-limit, but clues are given and most players will do it in no time and find themselves wanting more. Considering D spans three CDs it would have been nice to have a little more content, but as it stands Warp's game is just a brave experiment.

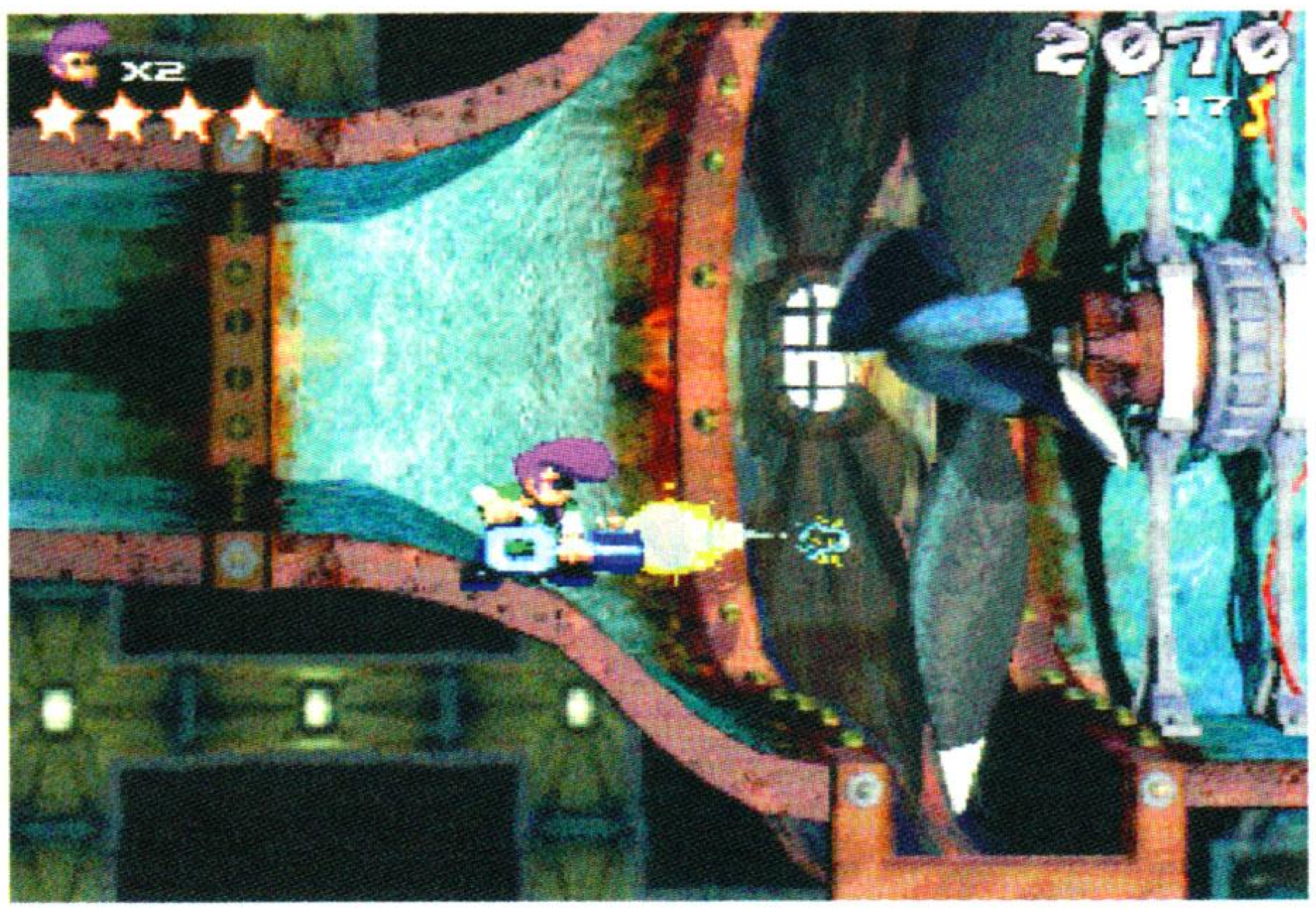
★★★

A STYLISED AND DISTINCTIVE ADVENTURE, D IS A RADICAL DEPATURE FROM THE USUAL PLAYSTATION FARE - AND IT'S WELL WORTH A LOOK

JOHNNY BAZOOKATONE

US Gold's much publicised platformer disappoints...

While PlayStation owners are spoilt for choice in regards to 3D games, die-hard platform game fans have been limited in choice to the God-awful Rayman. The problem seems to lie in that everyone knows what a technical miracle the PlayStation is and feels they must exploit in every avenue it offers. As such, while Rayman is a graphical feast, it also lacks the platform finesse seen in, say, the Mario series. US Gold have now fallen into the same trap as they unveil their rendered hero, the eponymous Johnny Bazookatone to a horde of expectant Sony owners. Johnny is a pop superstar US Gold would have us believe is more popular than Take That and any other teeny band you care to name, and his success has bought him all the spoils a young man could ever want: money, fames, girls - and the envy of the devil himself, L Diablo.



Diablo believes that Johnny's success is down to his magic guitar, and thus kidnaps the star's band, his girlfriend, and tries to pilfer the guitar in the process. But, as this is related via a very impressive rendered intro, we see Diablo falling at the last hurdle and the magic guitar being rescued by our blue-quiffed hero. Thus, guitar in hand, Johnny task is rescue as he explores a series of eight-way-scrolling stages in search of a showdown with Diablo himself.

One of the key points US Gold are using to push Bazookatone is that it is fully rendered throughout. As Johnny scours the assorted stages, he picks his way through delightfully detailed graveyards, apartments and kitchens, while fending off attacks from similarly-crafted enemy sprites. At its most basic, Johnny Bazookatone is a platform game mixed with shoot 'em up ideas. Johnny moves left and right and jumps with familiar skill, but is armed with music notes fired from the aforementioned guitar. Using these combined skills his aim is to make it from one side of the scrolling play area to the other, collecting bonuses and killing foes. Sadly, while it seems nigh-on impossible to screw up such a basic premise, Johnny Bazookatone is limited by a number of factors. First of all, the sprite detection is lousy and Johnny is hit by sprites he has killed mere seconds ago, and secondly the levels are small and uninteresting. Frankly, US Gold have relied on the game's aesthetics for its appeal, and the limited and frustrating nature of the title soon become apparent after a couple of plays. This is dated, short-lived rubbish, and no amount of fancy dressing can save Johnny from the obscurity he is destined for.

★

The launch of the PlayStation has been met with a veritable avalanche of peripherals and general bumph. But which items are essential, and which are crap? Well, these five should be seriously considered.

1. MEMORY CARD
Essential for the vast majority of games, the memory card is well worth investing in. If you don't, you're going to be in trouble sooner or later...

2. SCART LEAD
Let's face facts - although the composite and RF signals are fairly decent, the picture quality is **nothing** compared to the full-on RGB experience.

3. LINK-UP CABLE
Doom. Two players. Two PlayStations. AWESOME. However, to get this ultimate in console-based entertainment, you're going to need a link-up cable eh?

4. A NEW PAD
Experience with Street Fighter Alpha has led to many blistered thumbs in the **MAXIMUM** office. Get a pad with a decent d-pad and all six relevant buttons available.

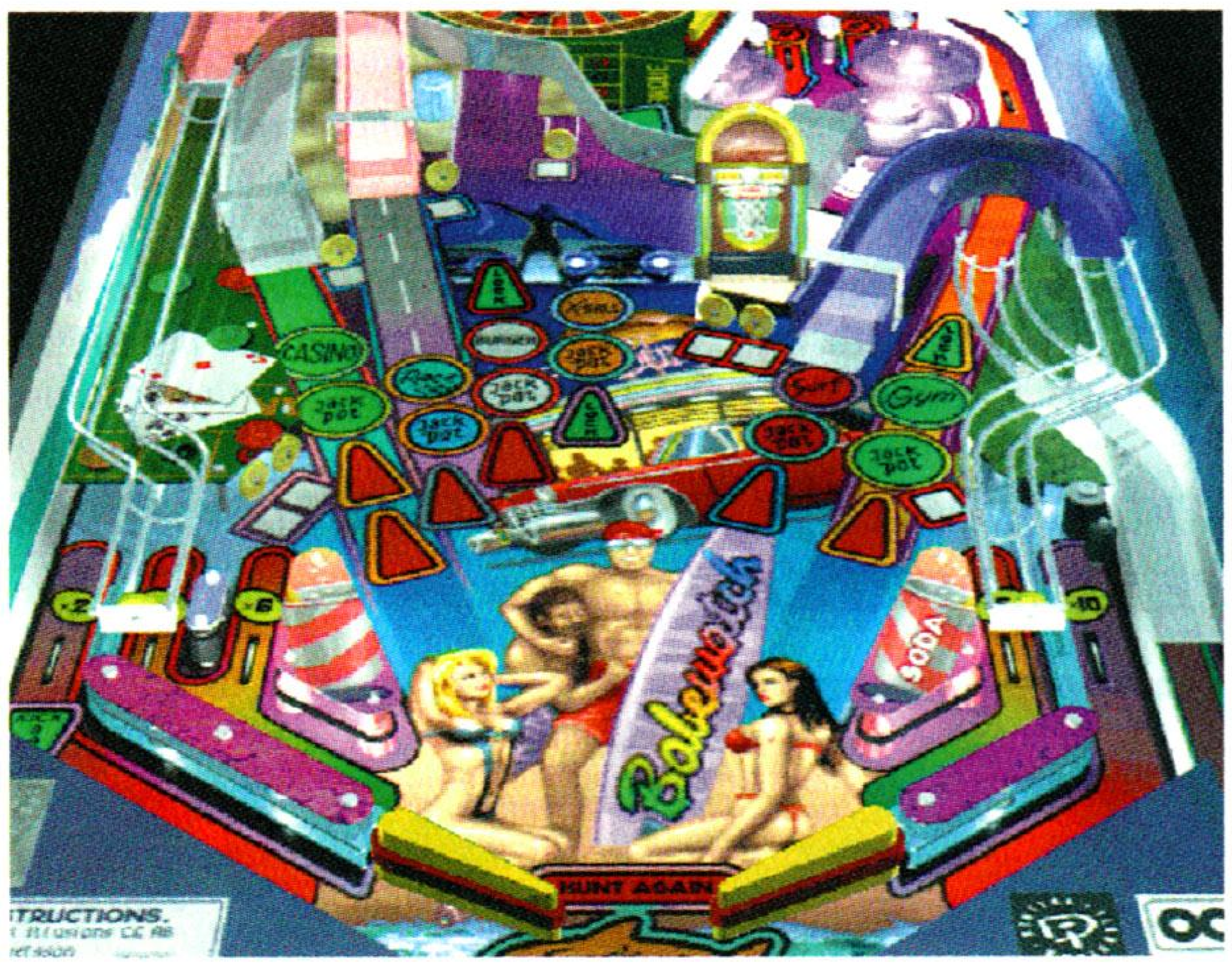
5. THE MOUSE
Er... Well, Discworld and Starblade Alpha benefit slightly. And the mouse mat's great. Yes...

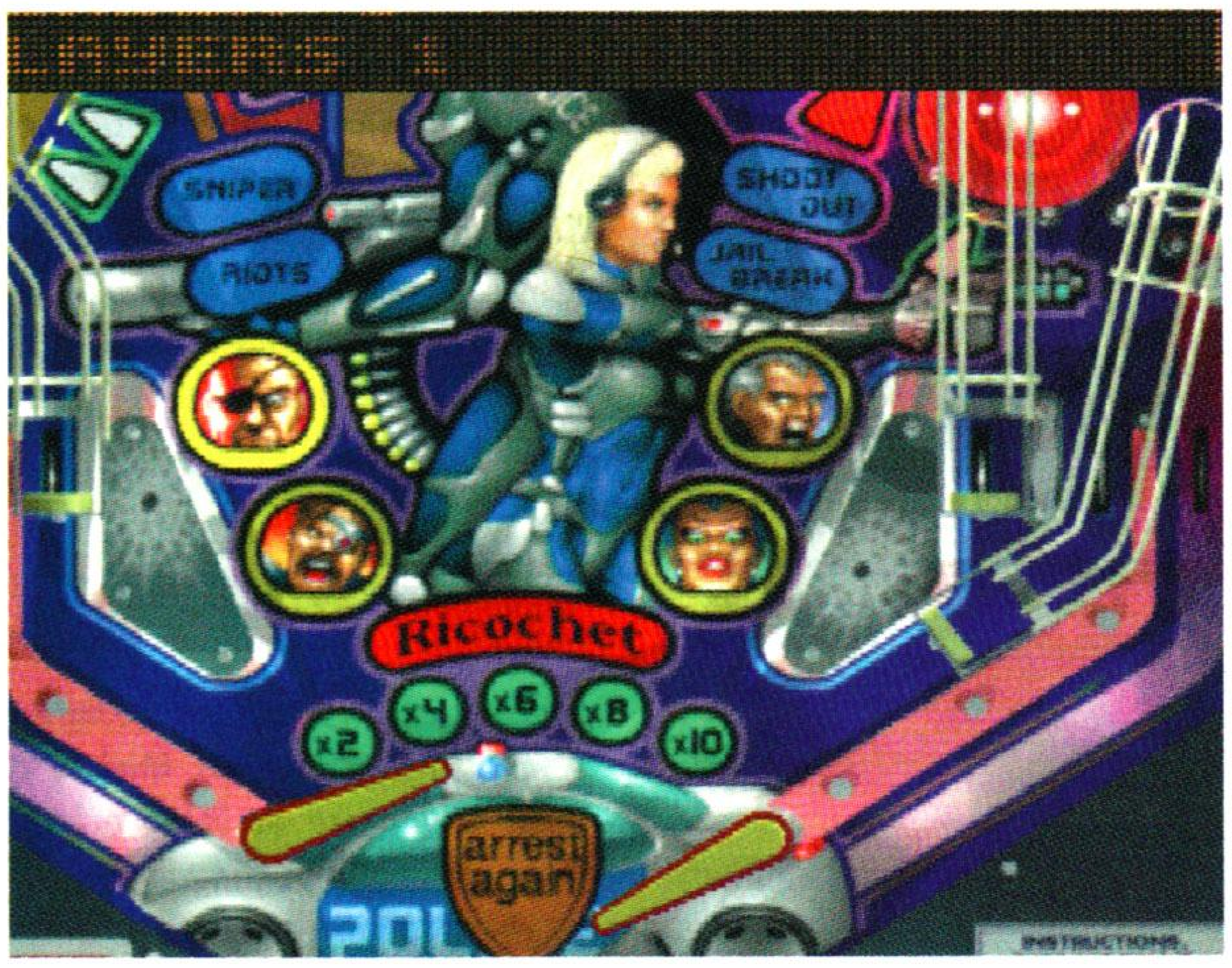
INFORMATION SUPPLIED
BY **MAXIMUM**

TRUE PINBALL

A sim perhaps too close to reality?

Pinball on a home system is a curious beast. You can never really replicate the real thing as tilts and nudges are always limited to one strength, and the way the ball reacts is never quite the same. That said, however, a good pinball simulator can offer far more imaginative table designs that defy gravity and even span two levels. Ocean's True Pinball comes at a time when EA, Virgin, and Empire Interactive are all lining up PlayStation tables, but the Mancunian team are the first off the mark and True Pinball is very nice indeed - if not exactly ground-breaking





In terms of gameplay, True Pinball is sound enough, but is this type of simulation really required on the next generation consoles?

Programmed by Digital Illusions who were responsible for the never-ending stream of Amiga pinball games for 21st Century, True Pinball offers the user four themed tables, each of which plays host to secret bonuses, flippers and bumpers in addition to the usual pictures of buxom women and Vikings adorning everything. Describing a pinball game is a repetitive task at the best of times, but True Pinball fills all the basic needs. The plunger and flippers are responsive, the ball moves well and realistically (it even has light-sourcing to indicate spinning), and the tables are varied. The programmers have also used the much-mooted 'power of the PlayStation' to add 3D and overall views of the table, although the difference between the views is minimal. Sadly, all this gloss fails to disguise the same faults that blight every other pinball game known to man. Basically, it just isn't pinball. That said, it is the best approximation we have seen in a long while, but one which will only be loved by casual pinball players - hardened players are better off cramming a few quid in the real thing.

★★

IN THE HUNT

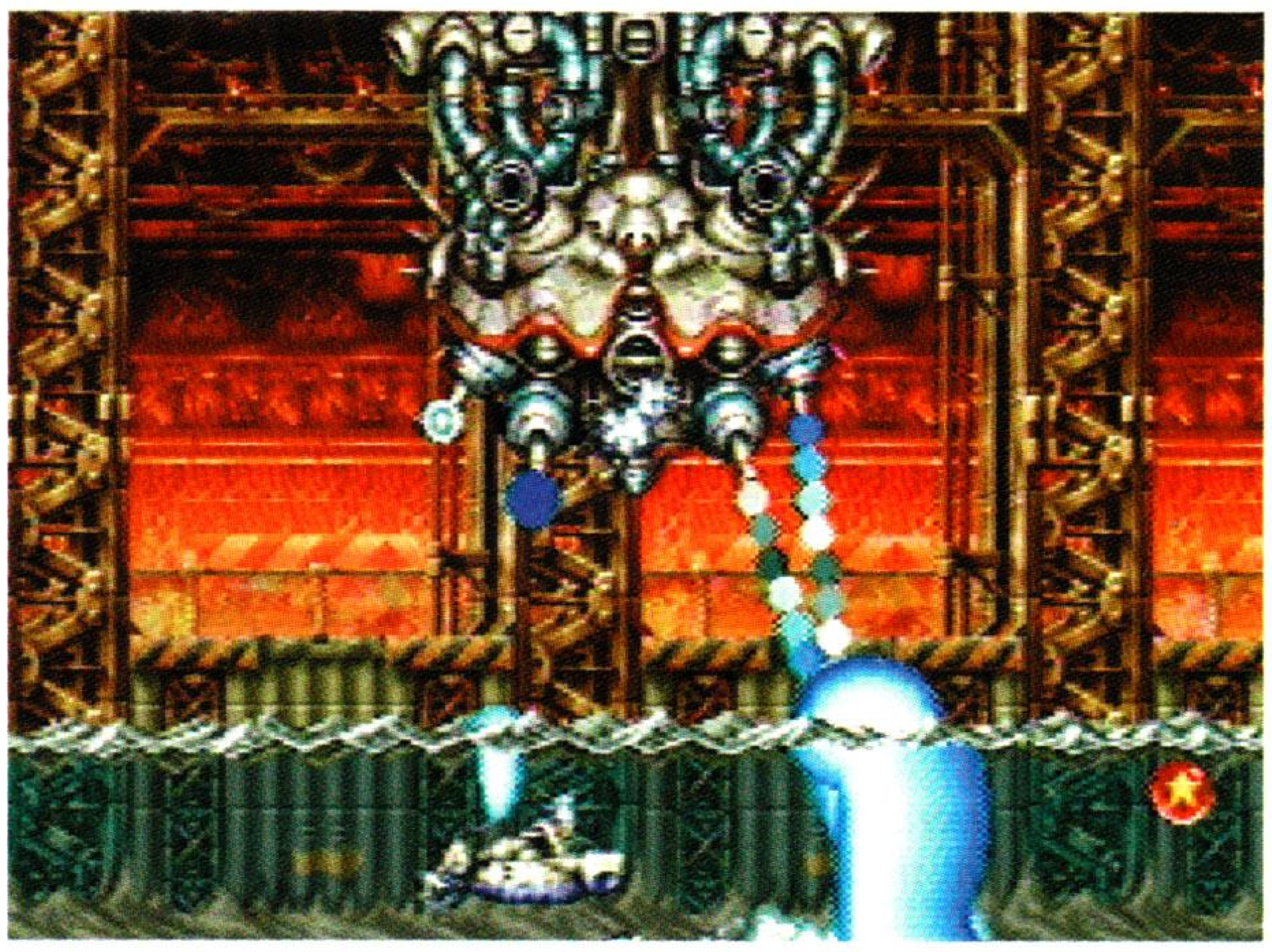
An obscure Irem coin-op conversion

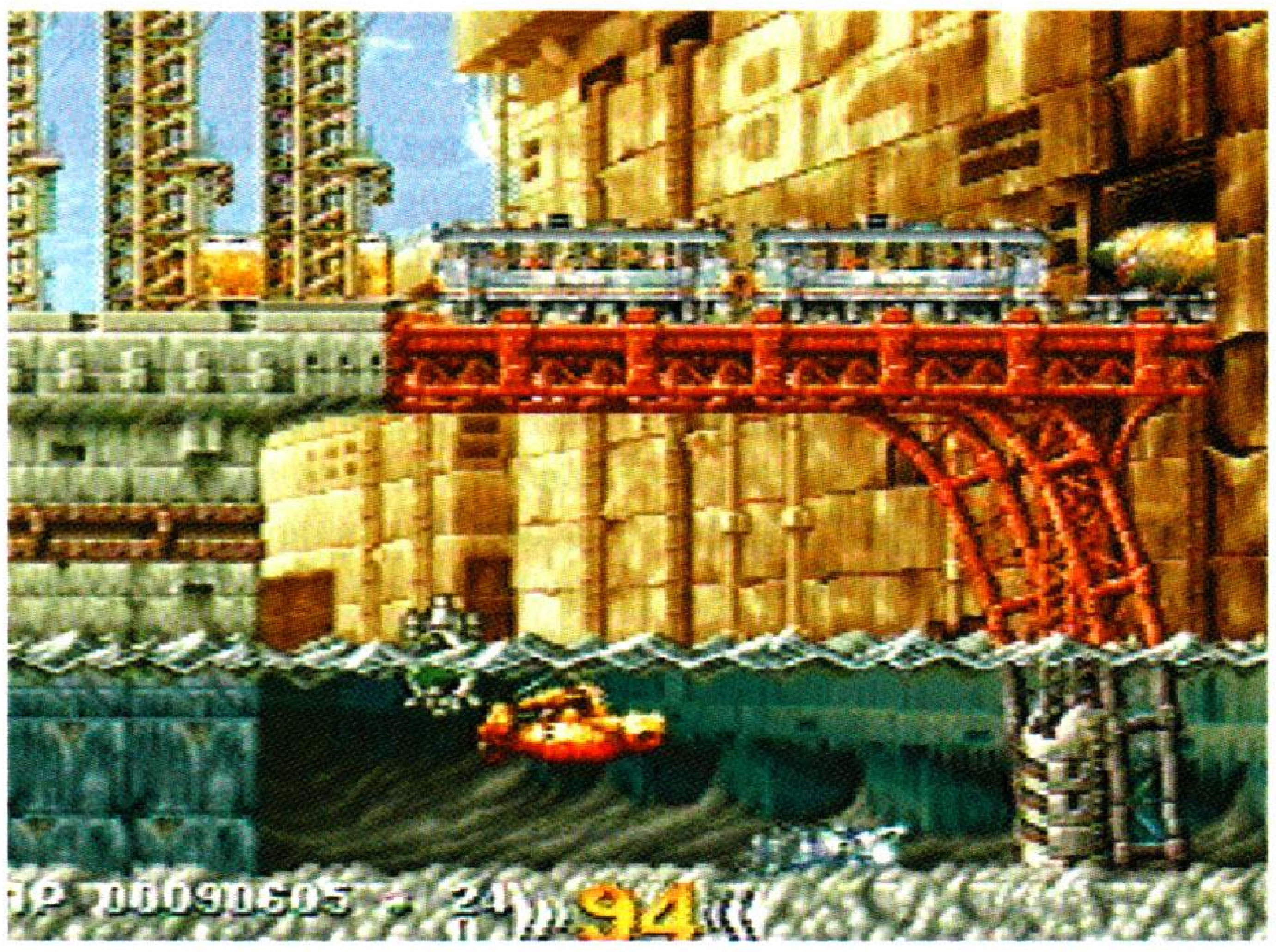
THQ, purveyors of countless Ren and Stimpy games for the Super NES, have turned their attentions to the PlayStation with a conversion of Irem's little-known In The Hunt coin-op. In these days of 3D epics and rendered wonders, In The Hunt is a real blast from the past. A horizontally-scrolling shoot 'em up, In The Hunt gives the player control of a tiny red submarine which, while out on a mission in the Arctic has been drafted to thwart the invasion plans of an evil, power-mad general. Thus, a six-stage mission of wanton destruction, power-ups and end-of-level bosses begins. Sadly, it is an all-too familiar mission.

There's nothing more gratifying than the mass destruction offered by a decent shoot 'em up, and it has to be said that In The Hunt measures up quite well. The missions take the player through icy wastes, involve blowing seven shades out of a city, and eventually into a lava-laden lair where the final opponent awaits. In fact, on passing through these stages it's hard not to be impressed by some of the little innovations. Some of the power-ups, for example, access mines which duly float to the top of the water to take out oncoming boats, whilst it is also possible to seek refuge from attack in the shattered remains of a tower block - there's even a King Canute boss who spends an entire level chasing the player, smashing through everything in his path!

In The Hunt is ultimately let down by its difficulty level. On our first attempt we worked our way through to the last stage and there is plenty of fun in the process, the lasting appeal comes under serious scrutiny. Add to this that further play is offered by using a second pad to access the second player's stash of credits (a trick we haven't seen since the Spectrum days), and In The Hunt is set to sink to he bottom of the PlayStation pile.

★★

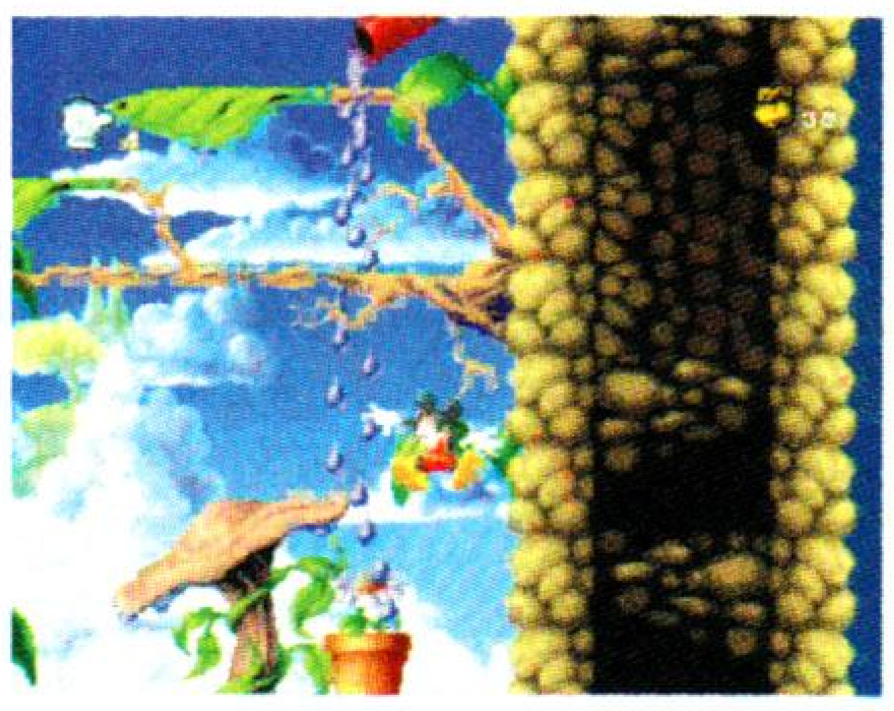




THE GRAPHICS RETAIN THE COMPLEXITY OF THE ORIGINAL ARCADE MACHINE, BUT THE SMOOTHNESS AND PACE HAVEN'T SURVIVED

MICKEY'S WILD ADVENTURE

16-bit escapade converted to superior hardware

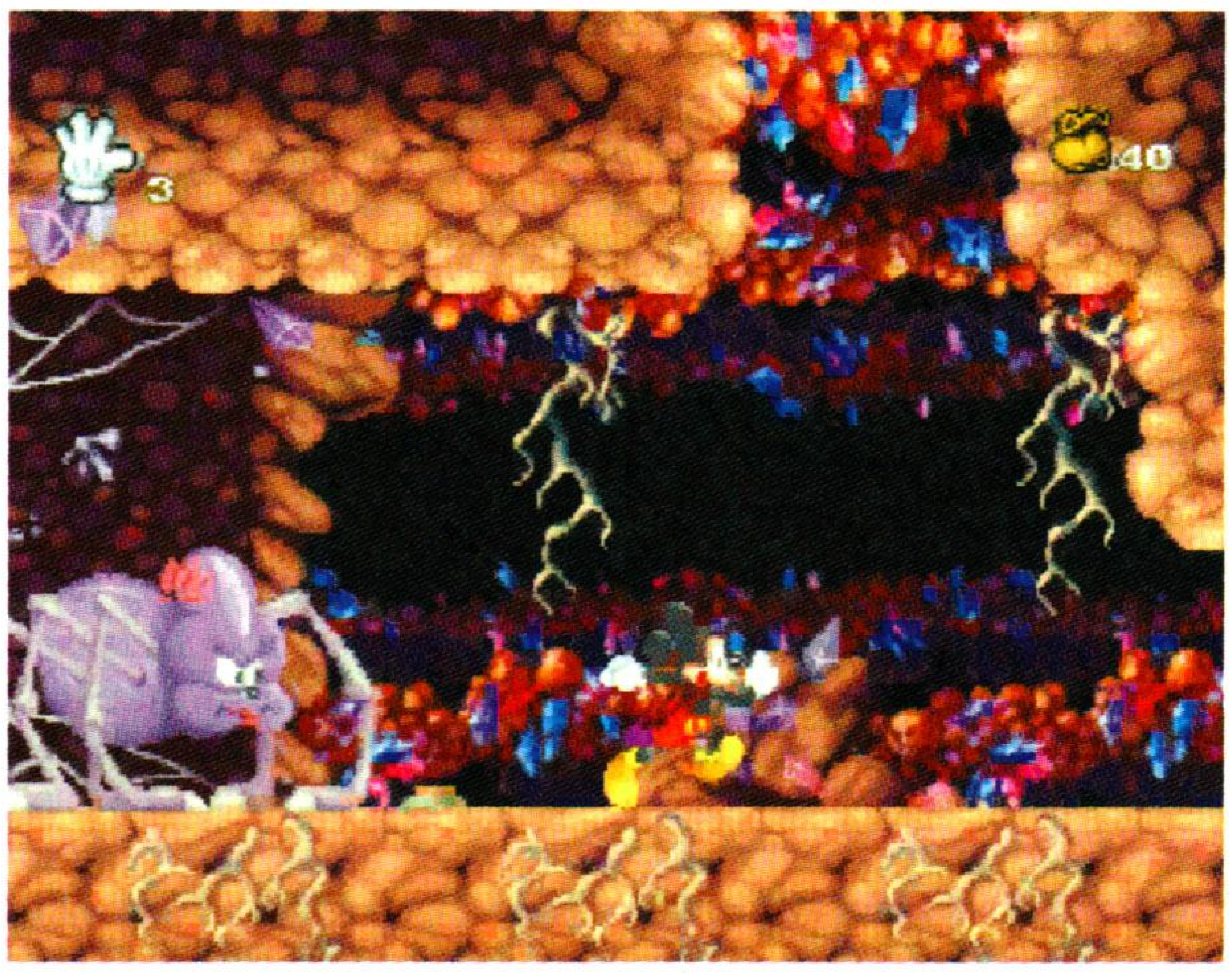


Originally released as Mickey Mania for the Super NES, Megadrive and Mega-CD two years ago, Sony have now decided to unveil a conversion of their two-year-old title for the PlayStation. Charting Mickey's 60-year existence, Mickey's Wild Adventure (to give it its new title) is a platform game featuring a host of characters lifted from his cartoon tenure. As platform games go, Mickey's Wild Adventure at least offers the playability the likes of Rayman and Johnny Bazookatone lacked, but its improvements over the aging 16-bit code is easy to miss.

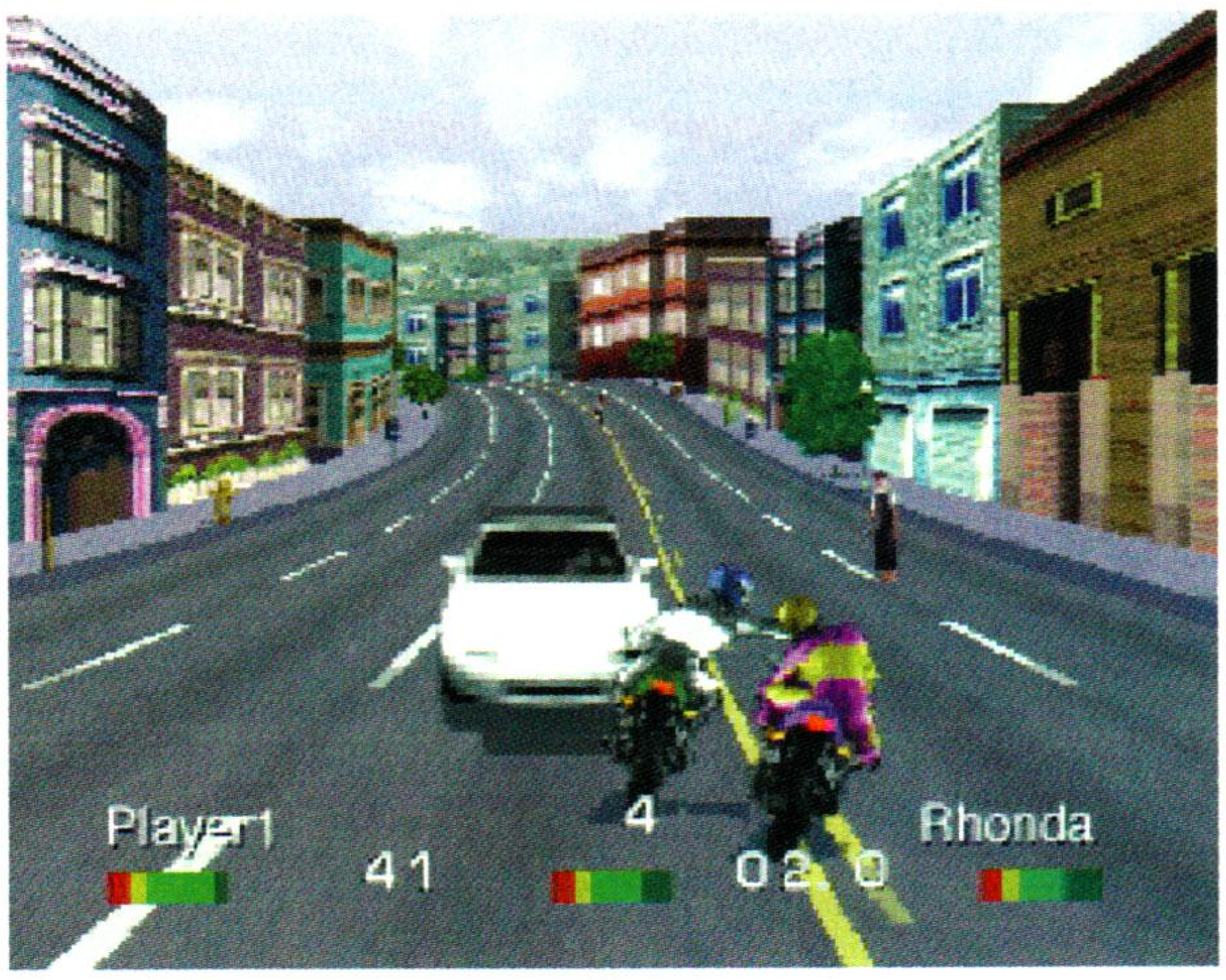
The game starts in 1926 with Mickey venturing on to the 'Steamboat Willy' set. Beautifully recreated in monochrome (even down to a little flickering hair on the side of the screen!), this first stage is left to introduce the player to the simple actions of running, jumping and staying on moving ledges. From here, Mickey then makes his way through 'The Haunted Castle', 'Mickey and the Beanstalk' and 'The Moose Hunt', with the graphical theme changing to mimic that of the cartoon - even down to the gaudy colours in the Moose Hunt. The basic gameplay is solid enough, with Mickey jumping on foes in the time-honoured way, throwing nuts at oncoming baddies, and killing off bosses, and there's certainly a challenge. Somehow, though, it all seems a little unsatisfying. The action never really gets into gear and its easy to appreciate graphical touches such as the monochromatic level gradually incorporating colour, instead of concentrating on the task in hand. An unusual choice for release, but still a far sight better than Rayman - not bad when you consider the concept is older than the PlayStation...

★★

ALTHOUGH DATED IN TERMS OF GAMEPLAY, THERE'S NO DENYING THAT MICKEY'S WILD ADVENTURE LOOKS EXCELLENT



ROAD RASH A huge disappointment on PlayStation



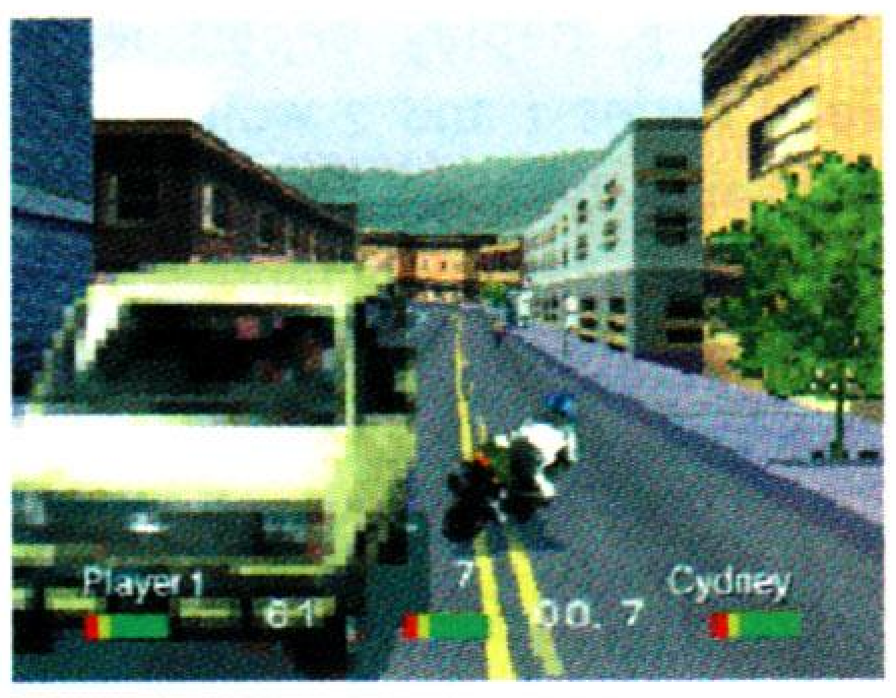
One of the veterans of the Megadrive scene, Road Rash roars on to the PlayStation via the ill-fated 3DO. A straight conversion of the aforementioned 3DO code, Road Rash is as timeless as ever as a concept, mixing motorbike racing with the chance to smack the heads of your fellow racers. Set across five landscapes - ranging from deserts to cities - the game is same as it ever was, with the player revving their mean machine, avoiding contact with the fourteen CPU-controlled racers, or taking it in turns with a second player. In fact, it's the same as it ever was, but what impressed Megadrive owners three years ago is now passe and superseded by the supremely playable ESPN Extreme Sports from Sony.

Player1
107
6
01.0
Axle

The problem with PlayStation Road Rash is that it tries to mix racing and fighting, but falls between the two stools. Taking the time to smash the skull of the person you're overtaking often means other bikers roar by, whilst, conversely, just zooming past them all leads into a dull race with no fighting at all. It is possible to mix the two if you so wish, but somehow you can't help but think it should all gel together a little better.

Graphically, the game is identical to the 3DO version, with the same FMV scenes (marred by a curious pink wash throughout) introducing the next level or mocking the player if they fail to make the grade. Similarly, the music is provided by the likes of Soundgarden and Therapy?, but isn't pacey enough and hardly mimics the atmosphere generated by WipeOut and its incredible techno tunes. In all, Road Rash has not dated well, and this conversion is another unwanted port from the 3DO instantly doomed to obscurity by ESPN which did it all so much better - and three months back.

★★



Player1
93
10
00.4
Sven

MAXIMUM's resident Tekken 2 experts put fingers to keyboard in order to gauge the five most popular fighters in Namco's seminal 3D arcade fighting game.

1. MICHELLE CHANG
A huge range of devastating techniques and floating combos characterises this extremely popular character.

2. NINA WILLIAMS
The mistress of chained techniques, Nina's is the one one moves list we've been dreading to print. Deadly in the right hands.

3. HEIHACHI MISHIMA
Having honed his techniques to the limit, Heihachi is ready to take down the traitorous Kazuya.

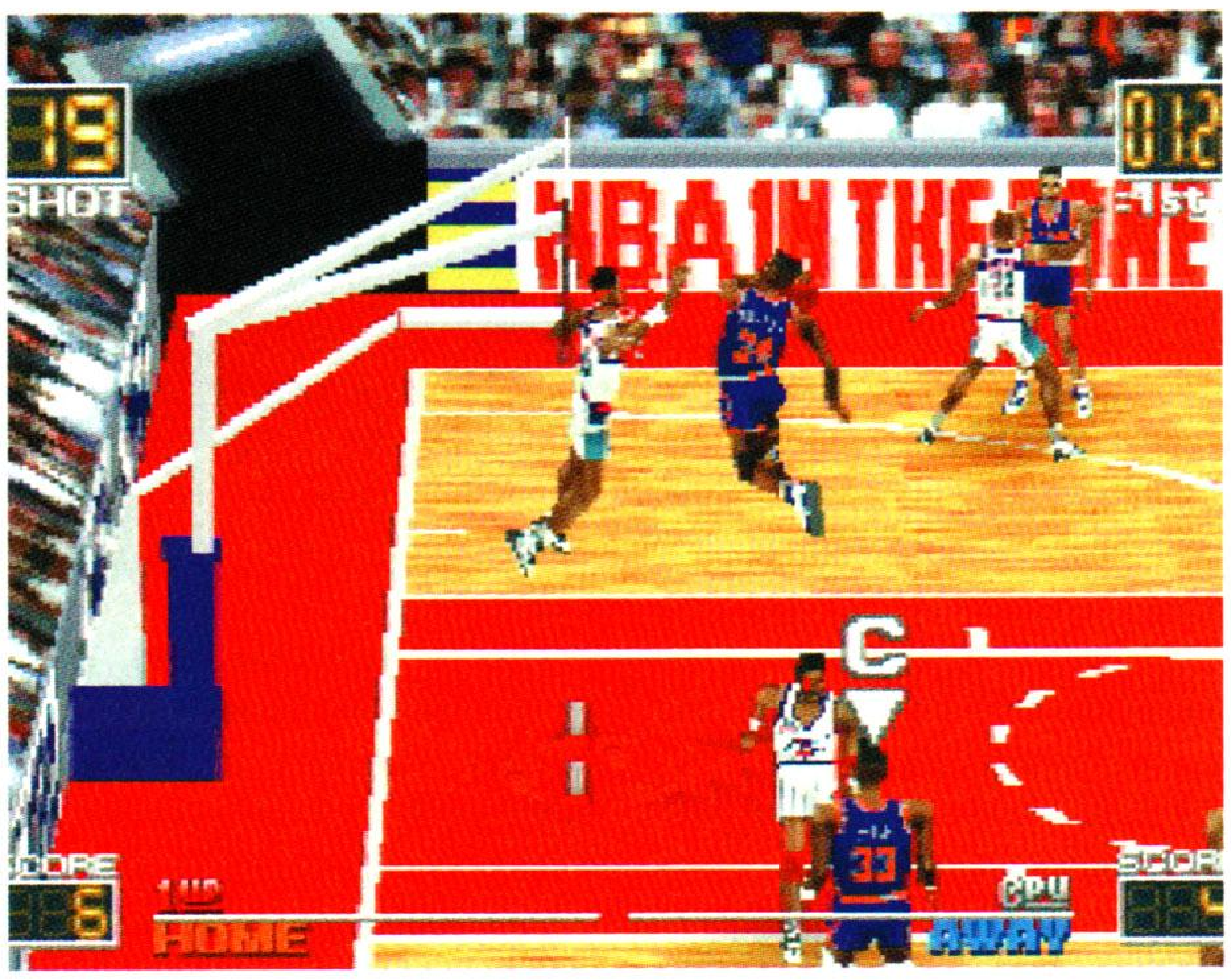
4. MARSHALL LAW
One of the simplest characters to master and thus one of the most popular. Not much changed from the first Tekken but still a fighter to be feared.

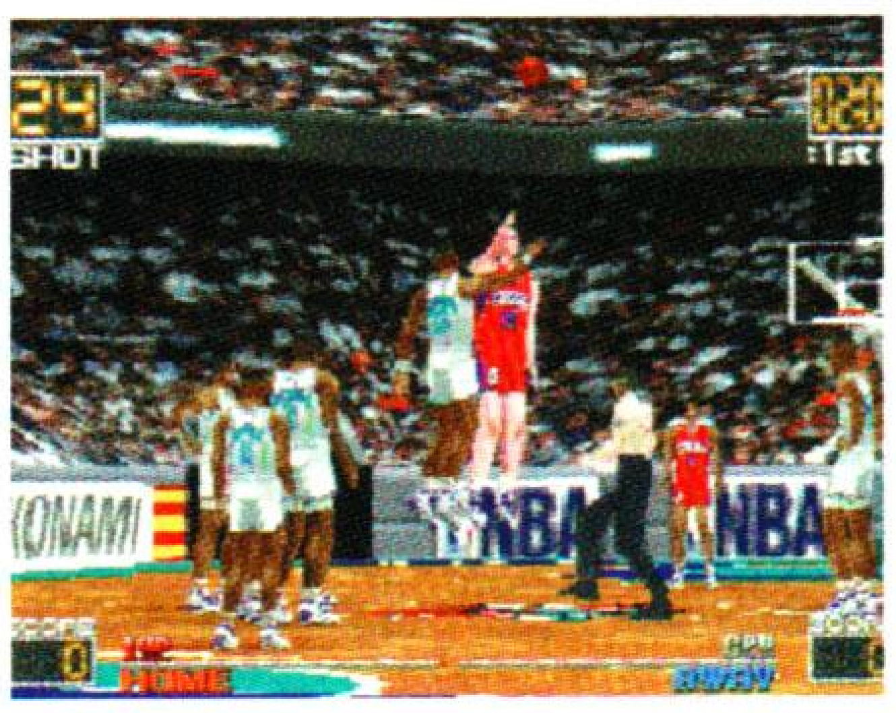
5. KING
The "beast priest" returns with a bewildering array of linked throws and combinations. He will destroy them all. Oh yes.

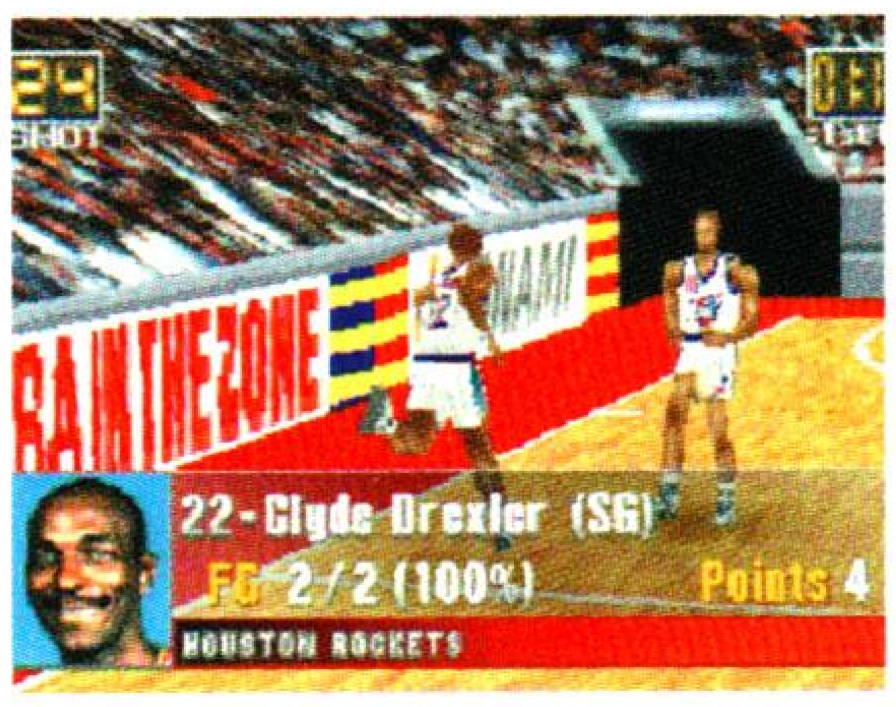
INFORMATION SUPPLIED
BY MAXIMUM

NBA IN THE ZONE Konami take basketball into the third dimension, going head-to-head with Sony's Total NBA

An NBA licence. Full authority to recreate all the rules of the original. A 3D court featuring huge, well animated sprites. Sound familiar? Welcome to NBA in the Zone, Konami's rival to Sony's home-grown Total NBA. While lacking the finesse of the Sony game with clunkier sprites, gaudier colours and less views (the Konami game features a minimum of views whilst Sony's lets you view the court from virtually any angle), it still plays slightly better than Total with more fluid passing and intercepting. In fact, it seems that Konami's R&D team have concentrated on the basics of play as opposed to the aesthetics and the result is a very playable game indeed. While In the Zone follows the set pattern of giving the player control over long shots, dunks, and passes, it also offers a little more. Ever seen a player pass the ball behind their back? It's in here. Ever seen a player turn away from an opponent and cut in on the inside? It's in here. In fact, while In the Zone looks a little rough, it is a veritable Michael Jordan when its comes to playability.







A TECHNICALLY ACCOMPLISHED TITLE, IN THE ZONE IS WORTH A LOOK

24
SHOT
01:4
1st
NBA
NBA
NBA
SCORE
2
1UP
HOME
CPU
AWAY
SCORE

Sadly, the same fault of Total NBA trips NBA in the Zone at the last hurdle. The basic sport isn't known for involving gameplay, and the action tends to head from one end to the other with only the occasional block to spice things up. Granted, the multi-player mode counters this somewhat, but even so it still becomes a tad repetitive after prolonged play. Personally, **MAXIMUM** prefers NBA in the Zone as the Konami game plays a bit better than the graphically-stunning Sony title, but it's still pretty much a tie.

★★★

Another issue of **MAXIMUM**, and another fighting game graces SNK's wonder console.This is great news for the beat 'em up fanatic, but a disappointment to almost everybody else. With Real Bout Fatal Fury, SNK have demonstrated that they can continue to create fighting titles of merit with new features to entice the punter, but everyone waiting for the fabled sequel to Magician Lord, or a port-over of the enigmatic Samurai Shodown RPG is likely gnashing their teeth with anticipation for a long time to come. **MAXIMUM** is somewhat disappointed that these titles have not been completed (indeed, Magician Lord 2 looks unlikely ever to appear), but looks forward with great anticipation an eventual non-beat 'em up release in the UK.

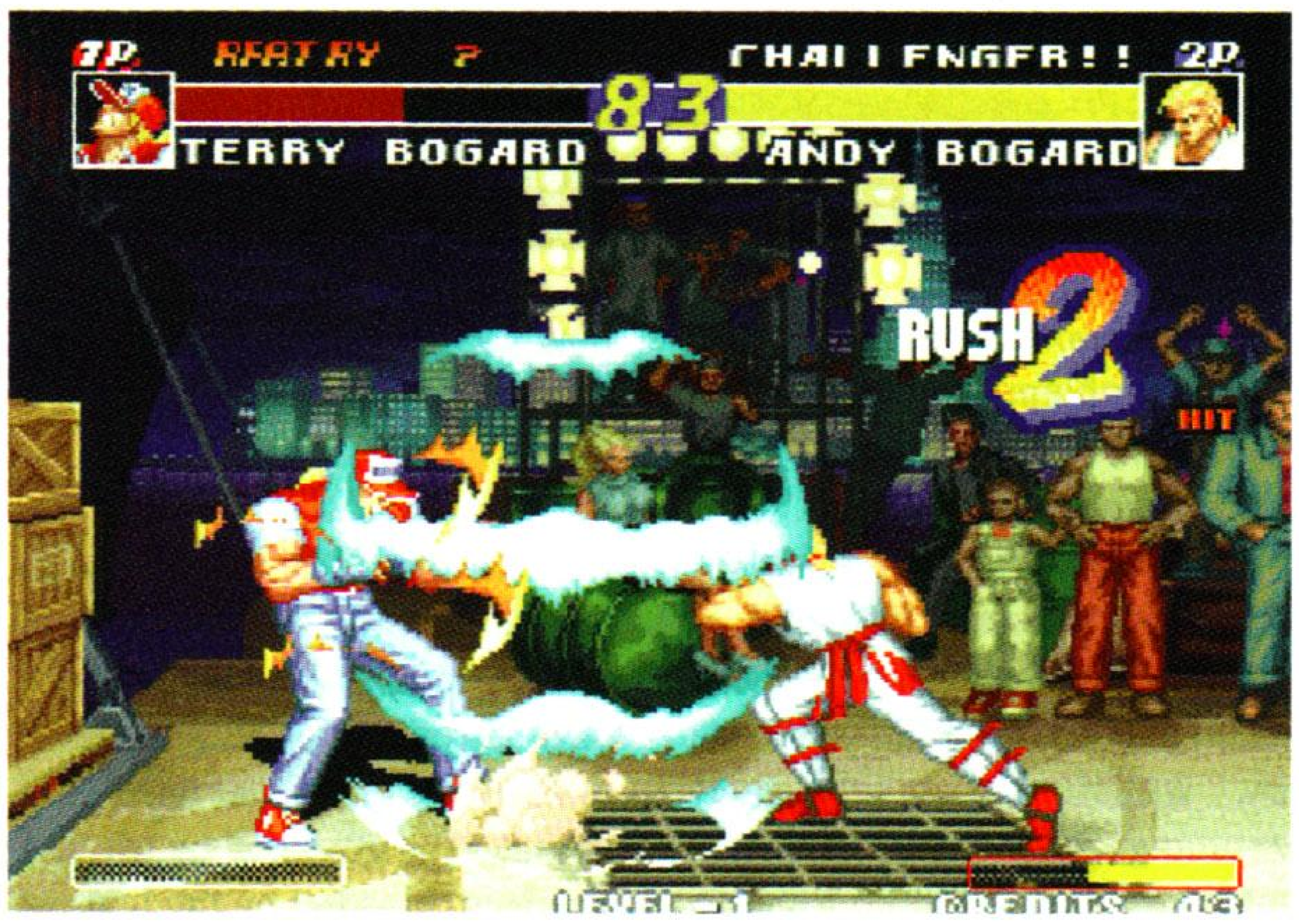
So for now, Neo Geo owners will have to make do with fighting titles and little else, and Real Bout Fatal Fury more than fits the bill. However, all of this seems set to change at the AOU arcade show to be held in Japan shortly - 12 titles are lined up including a new version of Art of Fighting along with previously touted titles such as Metal Slug.

Elsewhere, the CDZ has finally hit Japan, and presents a good import buy once the price of the hardware stabilises. Those gamers without a Neo Geo console and with money to burn, who are great fans of the games now have the chance to play the originals with little loading delays. But remember, both Sega and Sony have conversions planned for their own super consoles...

REAL BOUT FATAL FURY

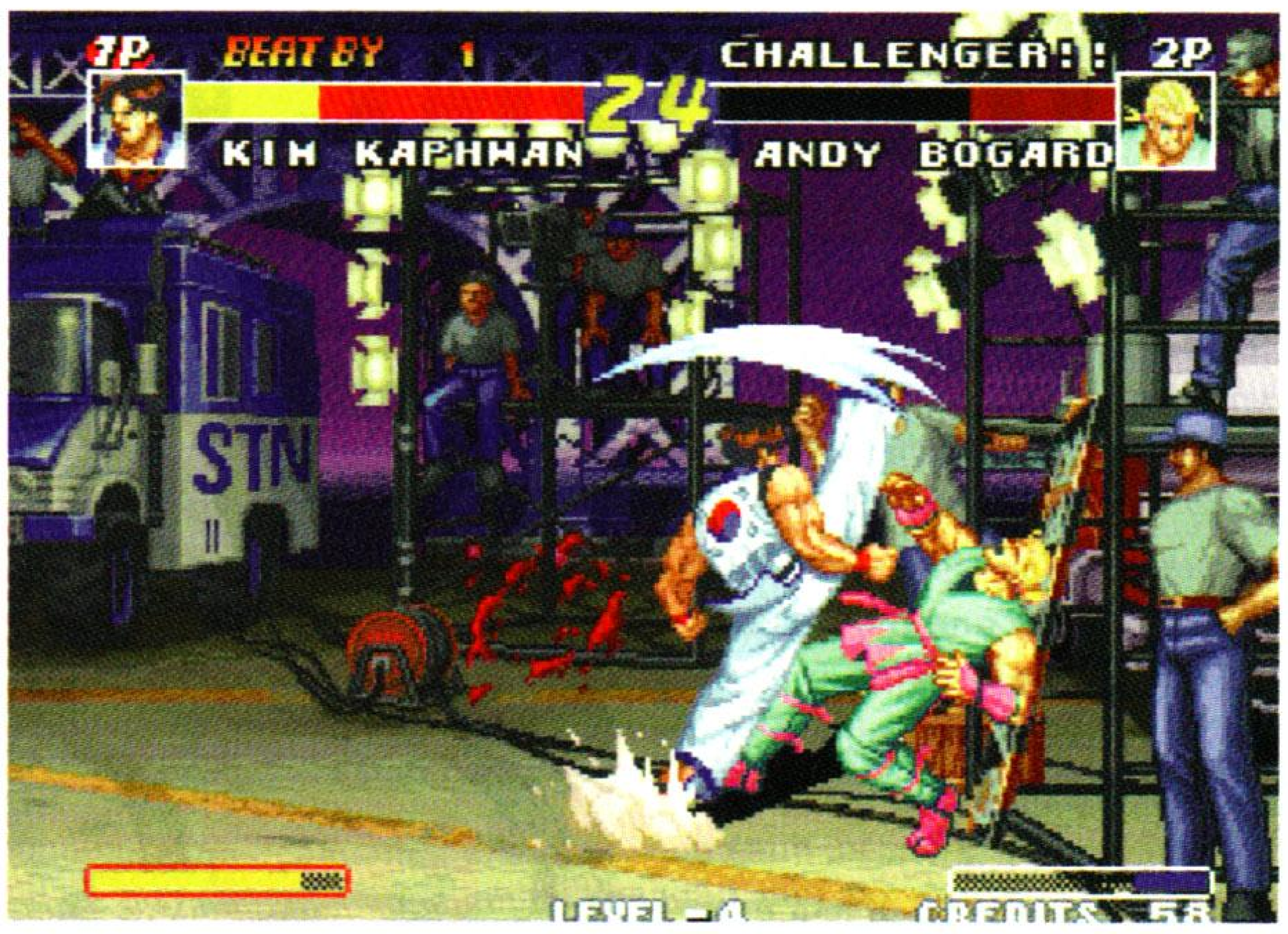
Can the Hungry Wolves survive a fifth appearance?

MAXIMUM is dispensing with the usual requests for a greater variety and number of Neo Geo releases as there is simply no point; SNK are sticking firm and only releasing carbon copies of the new SNK arcade beat 'em ups doing the rounds at the moment. What should be questioned is the viability of churning out a fifth Fatal Fury game (featuring the seventh appearance of the Bogard brothers and Mr Higashi), especially as the first couple of attempts proved to be somewhat lacking in the gameplay department. Fatal Furies 1 and 2 won a cult following, but also succeeded in frightening off a number of arcade goers looking for a change from Street Fighter 2.

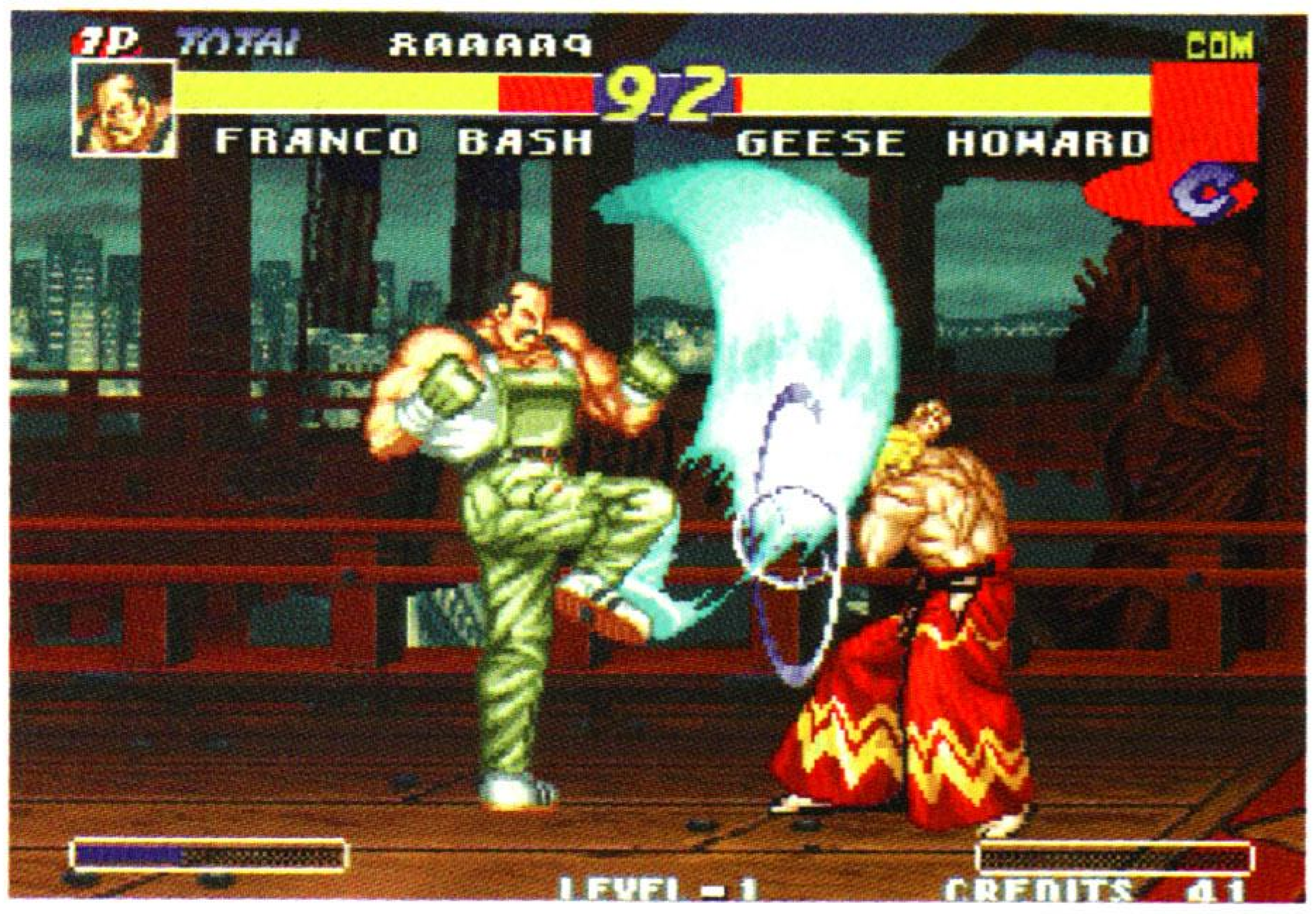


All this improved when Fatal Fury 3 finally hit the arcades in early 1995. The enhancements made in King of Fighters '94 had obviously influenced the programmers of Fatal 3, as the arrival of combos and super specials made this a highly entertaining combat title. Now Real Bout Fatal Fury has arrived with the two-fold task of drawing the crowds away from the likes of Tekken 2 whilst entertaining those already familiar with the Lone Wolves and their brethren. Has it succeeded?

Real Bout Fatal Fury is by far the greatest in the series, with ring-outs, an advanced combo system and vastly superior visuals!



Initially, this may seem just another rehash and to a certain extent, it is. The SNK developers have stuck with a similar gameplay to Fatal Fury 3, but have added to this playable formula in a number of ways. Firstly, the combatants have increased (taking the total to 16) and the combos are available (allowing a greater number of chained hits than ever before) but it is the variety of new features that add the necessary sparkle of unique gameplay that SNK's games are so famous for (and currently need now more than ever).



The main improvements stem from the pseudo 3D Oversway system that allows fighters to attack from behind and circle an enemy with ease. This leads to a more tactical battle, as assailants can dodge and weave as well as jumping straight into a foe. The second major addition is the ring-out system of forcing a player from an arena by repeated pummellings. This adds an air of tension to some of the bouts, and the actual perimeters are fairly sturdy, so there's little room to capture an opponent in a corner and cheaply knock him out of bounds.

The one-player game plays well and has just the right level of difficulty for most players. The final combat with Geese Howard is entertaining (if a little uninspiring), but Real Bout's two-player battles are the real reason for looking this release over. Although not as playable as the truly seminal King of Fighters '95, this goes head-to-head with Street Fighter Alpha and offers a genuinely new arcade experience. Those older gamers with horrible memories of the early Fatal Fury games need not worry about playability here, and despite the unoriginal characters and moves, this is a well-rounded and entertaining fighting title that Neo Geo fanatics should lap up.

★★★★

As any Neo Geo owner is aware, pantaloons play a huge part in many SNK fighting titles, and **MAXIMUM** has spent months studying just who has the widest trousers. The results may come as something of a surprise...

1 GENJURO KIBAGAMI (SAMURAI SHODOWN) - We were shocked to discover that Geese Howard's combat slacks were not quite as inflated as those worn by this supreme Samurai warrior. Mr Howard was said to be "somewhat disappointed" by the turn of events, and vowed to return to reclaim his title...

2 GEESE HOWARD (FATAL FURY) - A stunned Geese was knocked into second place, despite owning the most outrageous pair of pants ever seen. But our survey requested width, and Southtown's criminal supremo just didn't have the necessary inches...

3 SAISYU KUSANAGI (KING OF FIGHTERS) - Kyo's father was quoted as being "well chuffed" with his bronze medal in the trouser stakes. Let there be no doubt about the wideness of his combat slacks, but as they finished halfway down his legs, third place was his.

4 DUCK KING (FATAL FURY) - The monarch of the wide inside leg, Mr King even inflates his hipsters during bouts of fighting to confound his foe. We're not sure what he uses to inflate the said trousers, but we're willing to take a guess...

5 CHIN GENTSAI (KING OF FIGHTERS) - An elderly gentleman with a pair of excellent fighting pantaloons that have seen him through thick and thin. He takes his hat off (but thankfully not his trousers) to the maker of these cotton wonders, Mr Tung Fu Rue...

TROUSERS FILLED BY **MAXIMUM**

ALIEN TRILOGY...
Have you got the stomach for it?

SPECIAL SOUVENIR ISSUE!

Featuring the exclusive first review of Acclaim's eagerly awaited Alien Trilogy.

PLAYSTATION PLUS

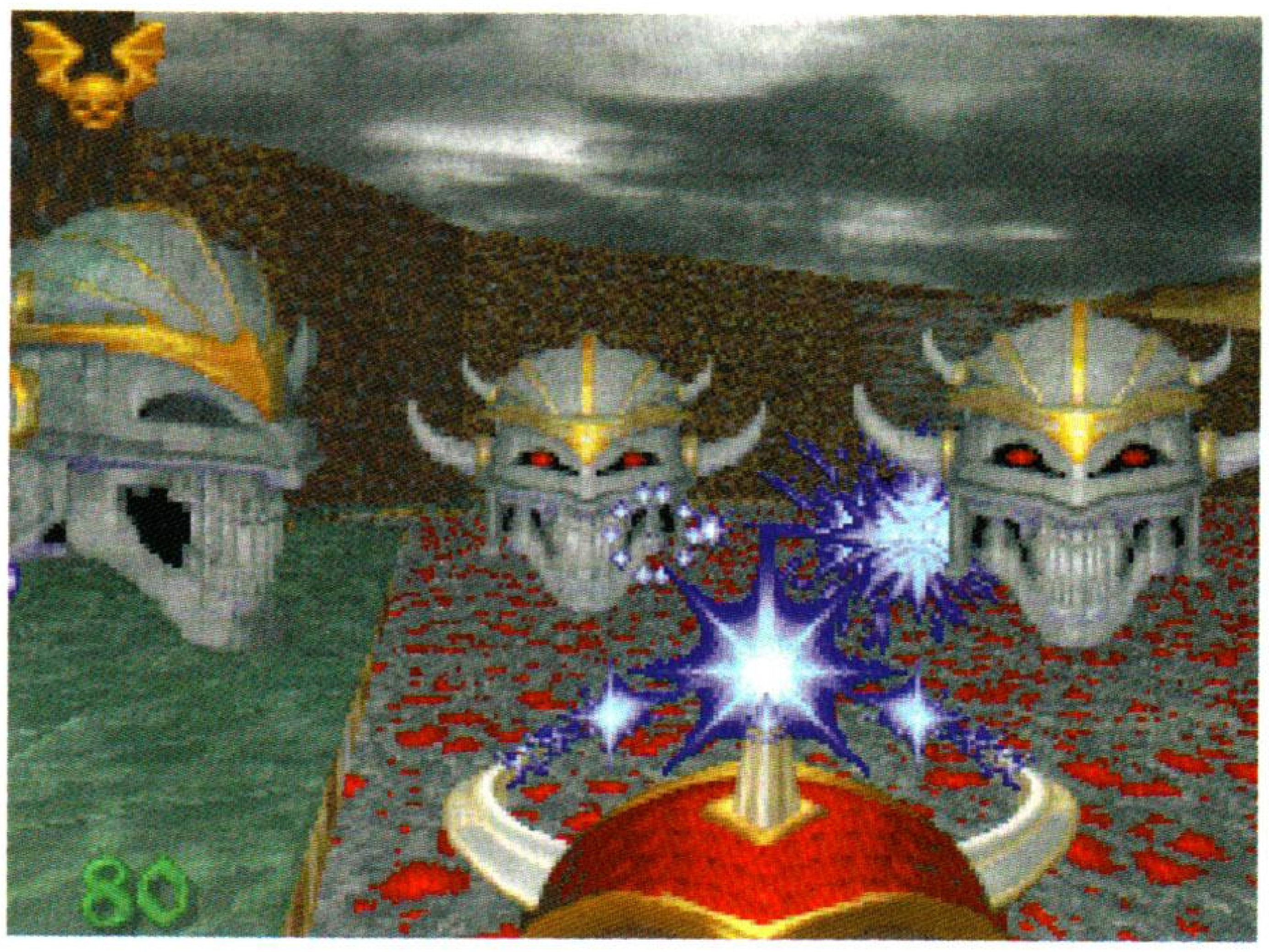
MARCH ISSUE ON SALE FEBRUARY 23RD

The PC market remains pretty solid this month, with a number of quality releases finally arriving in time for **MAXIMUM's** strenuous reviewing process. As you can see, the general quality of software is on the up, with average marks far higher than in the PlayStation and Saturn reviewing sections. This could well be down to the sheer size of the PC market - with the potential to shift hundreds of thousands of units across the world (due to the enormous installed base), huge development budgets usually lead to better quality software. It's just a shame that the vast majority of wares tend to come from the USA - true, some awesome software has emanated from the States (like Doom, of course), but it does make you wonder what the Japanese could do with the Pentiums of today. For example, the very Japanese Virtua Fighter Remix is by far and away superior to any other game of the same genre on PC.

Of course, **MAXIMUM** is still waiting for Quake and Into The Shadows - we should have seen both titles by now, but maybe next month we might have some more news...

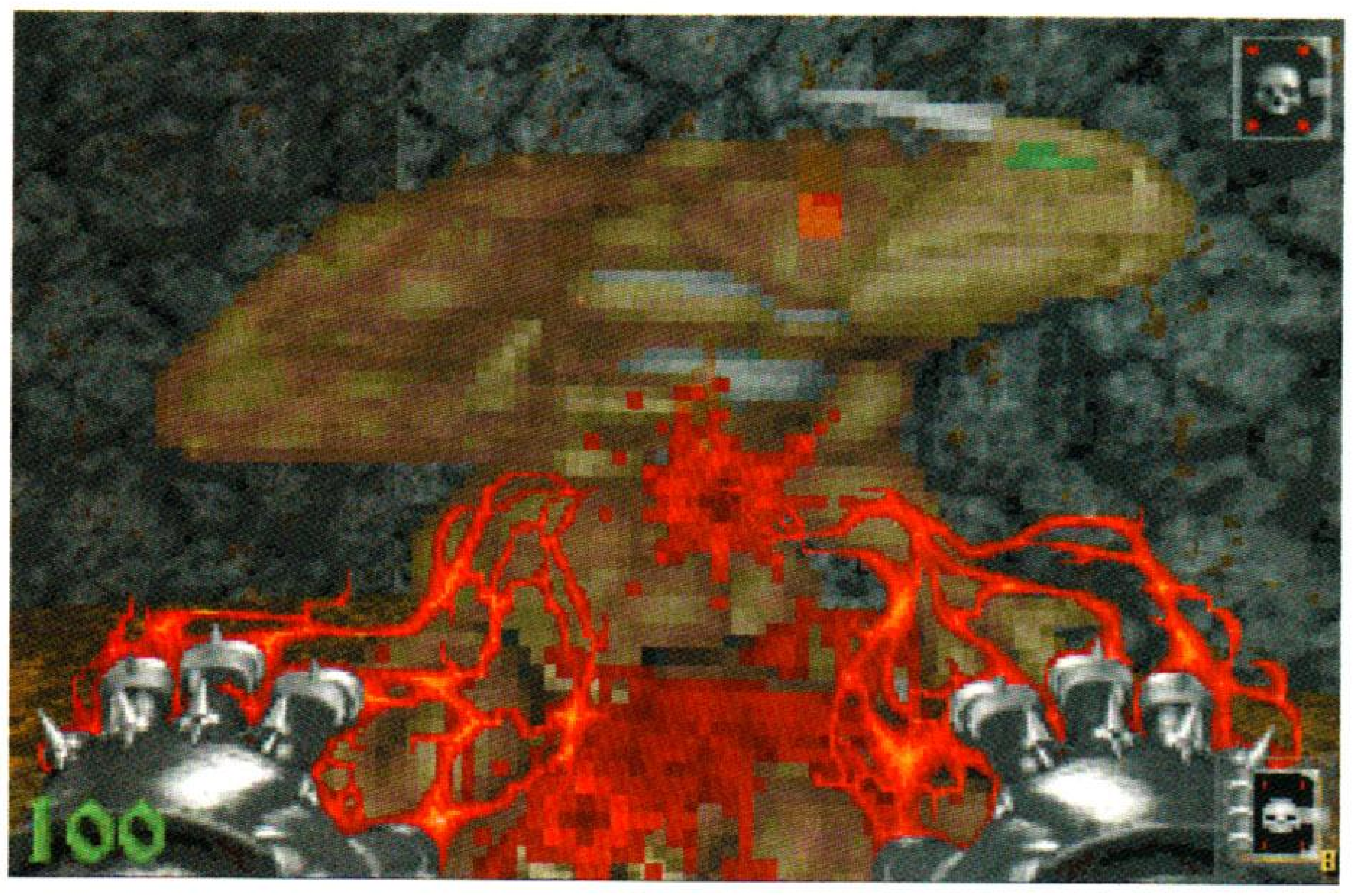
HERETIC

Can the PC cope with another 3D hack 'em up?



It seems rather strange that GT granted Heretic an official release just months after the seminal Hexen was unleashed on the world. The follow up to Heretic (or 'Doom with wands' as it has come to be known) has entered the homes and hearts of many a PC owner, but has never achieved official status. Now however, GT feels that the time is right to launch Heretic in the light of the success of Hexen, perhaps in an attempt to swamp the market with very playable and highly atmospheric 3D arcade adventure titles. To this end, they seem to have achieved dominance over the genre and the PC market; and with Quake to follow sometime this year, this could well be the year of GT Interactive.

HERETIC FINALLY GETS AN OFFICIAL LAUNCH - AND IT'S GAINED TWO EXTRA EPISODES FOR EXPERT GAMERS!



THE FIRST GAME TO LICENSE ID'S DOOM ENGINE REMAINS A QUALITY PRODUCT

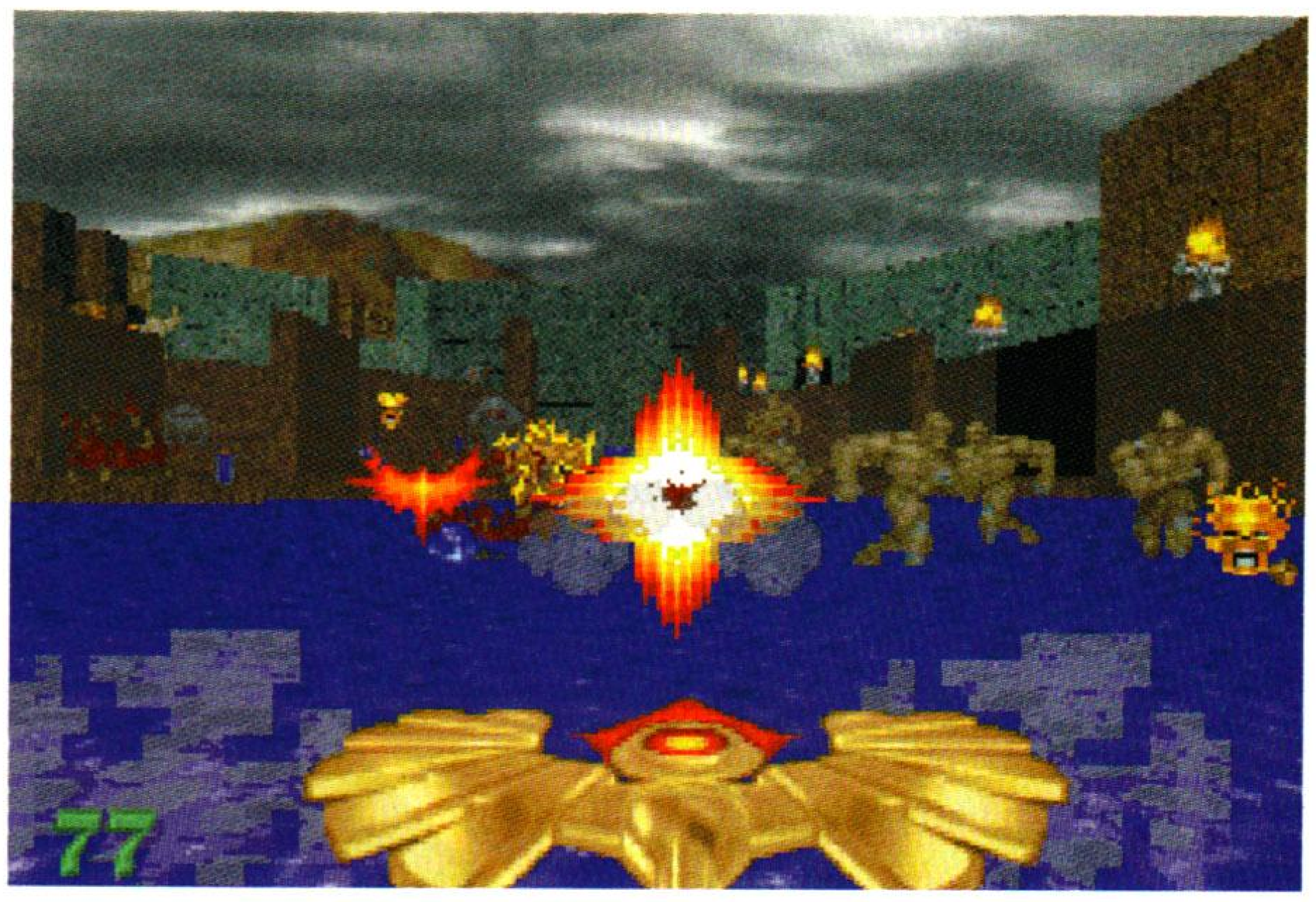
Meanwhile, UK gamers can whet their appetites for the forthcoming id heavyweight with an official release of Heretic. In order to entice those gamers who may feel slightly suspicious about forking out forty quid on a game they've either played or have the sequel to, GT have thoughtfully included 18 new levels (or two new chapters). These have been specially designed with the expert player in mind, and feature quite the most absurd number of gibbering entities yet seen in a video game. This is marvellous news for those gamers who reckon they had earlier versions of Heretic licked, and perfect for the newcomer, who has a wealth of levels for the original game to run through before attempting the final two chapters.

Opinions throughout the gaming community regarding the game itself have varied enormously, but the general consensus seemed to be one of enthusiasm. Yes, this was essentially Doom in another guise, and the fun of blasting a large Weredragon wasn't quite up there with blowing a Mancubus away with a double-barrelled shotgun, but this was a supremely polished game nevertheless, and couldn't really be faulted for what it was. With the extended version of Heretic released to the gaming world, **MAXIMUM** feels that the general comments made are rather apt. This plays exactly the same as Doom, apart from the inclusion of spells and an option to tilt your Elf's head up or down, but the premise is exactly the same - destroy every demonic minion in a fiery explosion of body parts.

Being a spruced-up version of an already superseded (and highly overpopulated) genre, **MAXIMUM** had initial reservations, but these soon subsided when we started our monumental hack through the new chapters. Indeed, it is these two extra levels of frenzied fun that stops this game from being just another official release of a shareware and registered classic. The addition of the new levels mean that UK gamers now have a real reason to buy the this game, coupled with a number of excellent features and a stunning multi-player link-up that sets Heretic apart from its rivals.

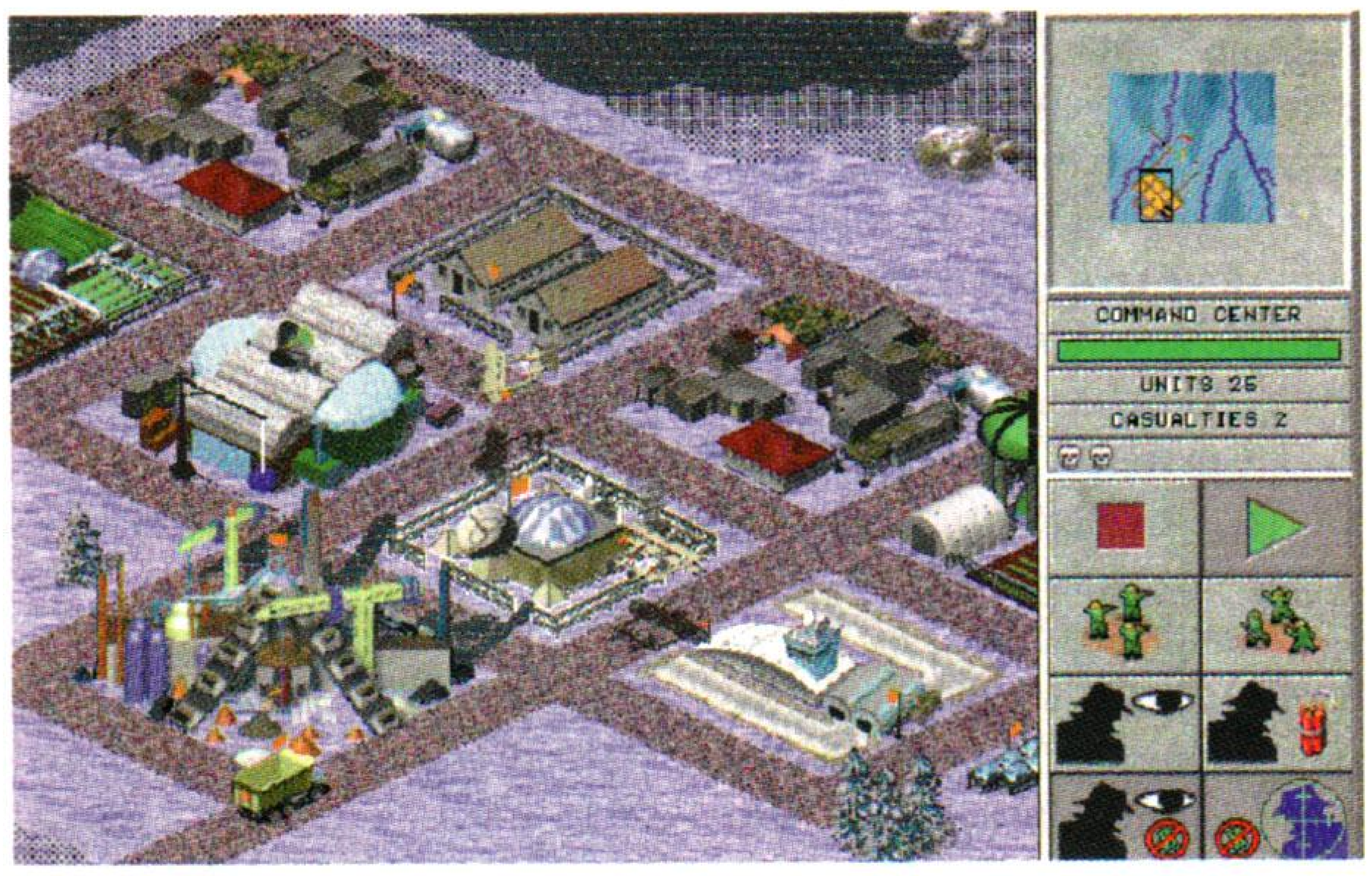
Of course, most of the world has played Doom, and Heretic runs in exactly the same manner, substituting military hardware for magic wands. The 3D graphics engine is a slightly tweaked form of that used in Doom, and it rockets along at exactly the same speed whilst fully creating a feeling of supernatural dread and fear. The spell book adds a further touch of excellence, but before we go overboard with our praise; one word of warning: This isn't Hexen, and feels slightly amateurish compared to the innovations present in the sequel and the proposed quality of Quake, so bear this in mind. Despite these small reservations, we wholeheartedly recommend that you have a serious look at this comprehensive version of Heretic. This is certainly a worthwhile consideration, especially for those new PC owners who haven't experienced the mediaeval delights of this brutal and gory offering.

★★★★



THIS MEANS WAR

Microprose attempt to clone the successful Command and Conquer formula



It's true that copies are rarely as good as the original, and MicroProse's Command and Conquer clone is no exception to the rule. Like C&C, it's an absorbing strategy game in which the player must gradually build up their army before leading the troops to victory. This is done through resource management, building mines to extract precious minerals from which factories are made, allowing tanks to be constructed, and so on.

Packed with 40 individual missions, it's best to start small and gradually build up to bigger, better things. Therefore using what little resources you're initially rewarded with to scrape together a dozen soldiers and a couple of scout bikes is more advisable than blowing all your minerals on a single armoured car. Besides, the various vehicles and troop types are only introduced as progress is made, so the more impressive hardware, such as heavy tanks and jet fighters, is only available when you've built up your empire.

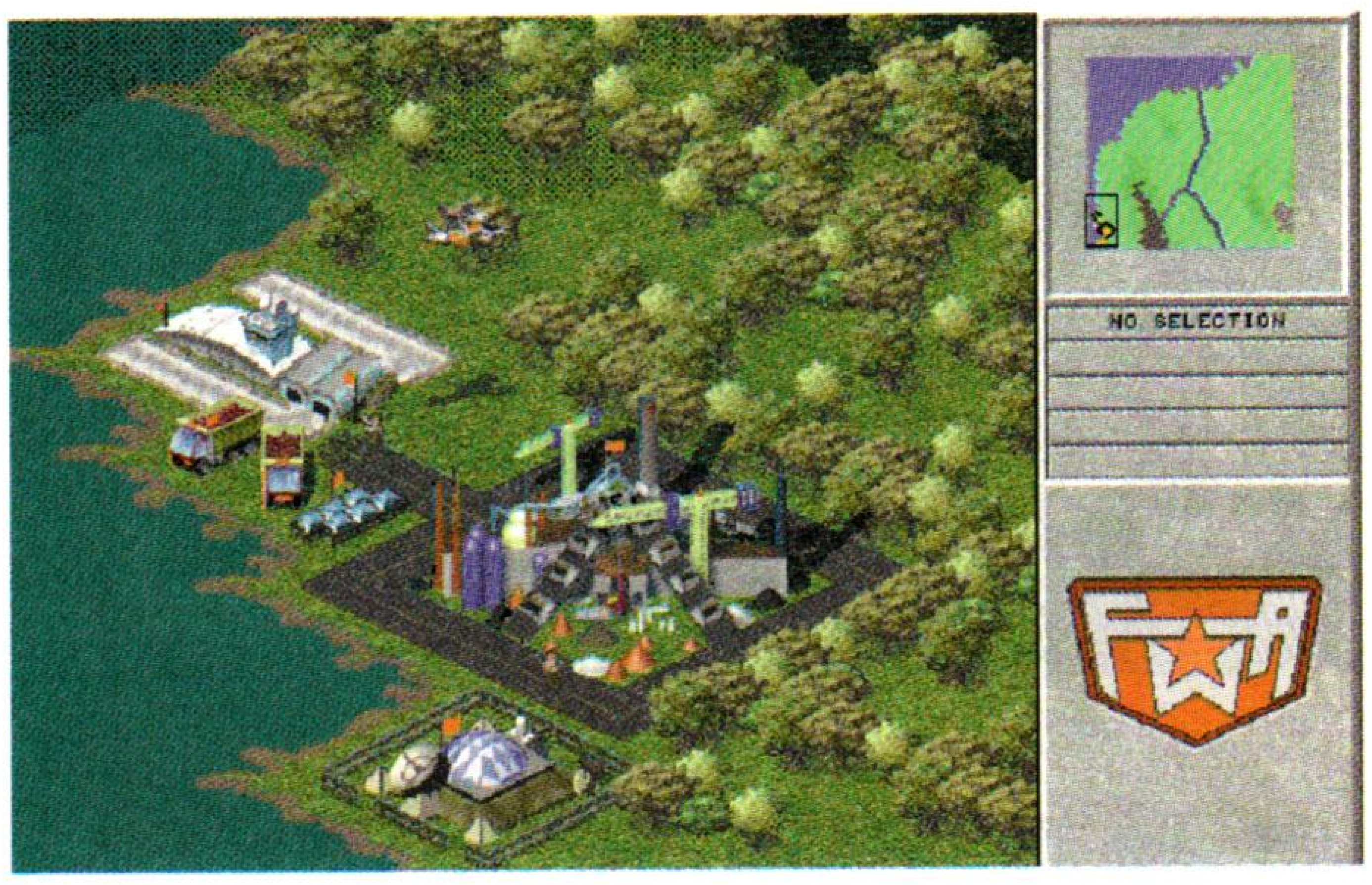
In addition to the de rigueur battle tanks and foot troops there are more specialised units, such as scouts and spies. While the latter can secretly infiltrate enemy HQs in the hope of inciting rioting in their base, scouts can cover terrain more swiftly than basic soldiers. Therefore they're vital for gaining a general over-view of the battlefield, which is initially clouded in darkness C&C-style.

However, while This Means War! is crammed with strategy and resource management, the combat aspect of the game is a far cry from Command & Conquer's frenetic blasting. Instead the battles plod along at a more sedate pace, and as a result This Means War! doesn't have the same in-your-face attitude of Westwood's masterpiece. Nevertheless it's an absorbing beast, providing you've got the patience to persevere through This Means War!'s relaxed gameplay.

★★★

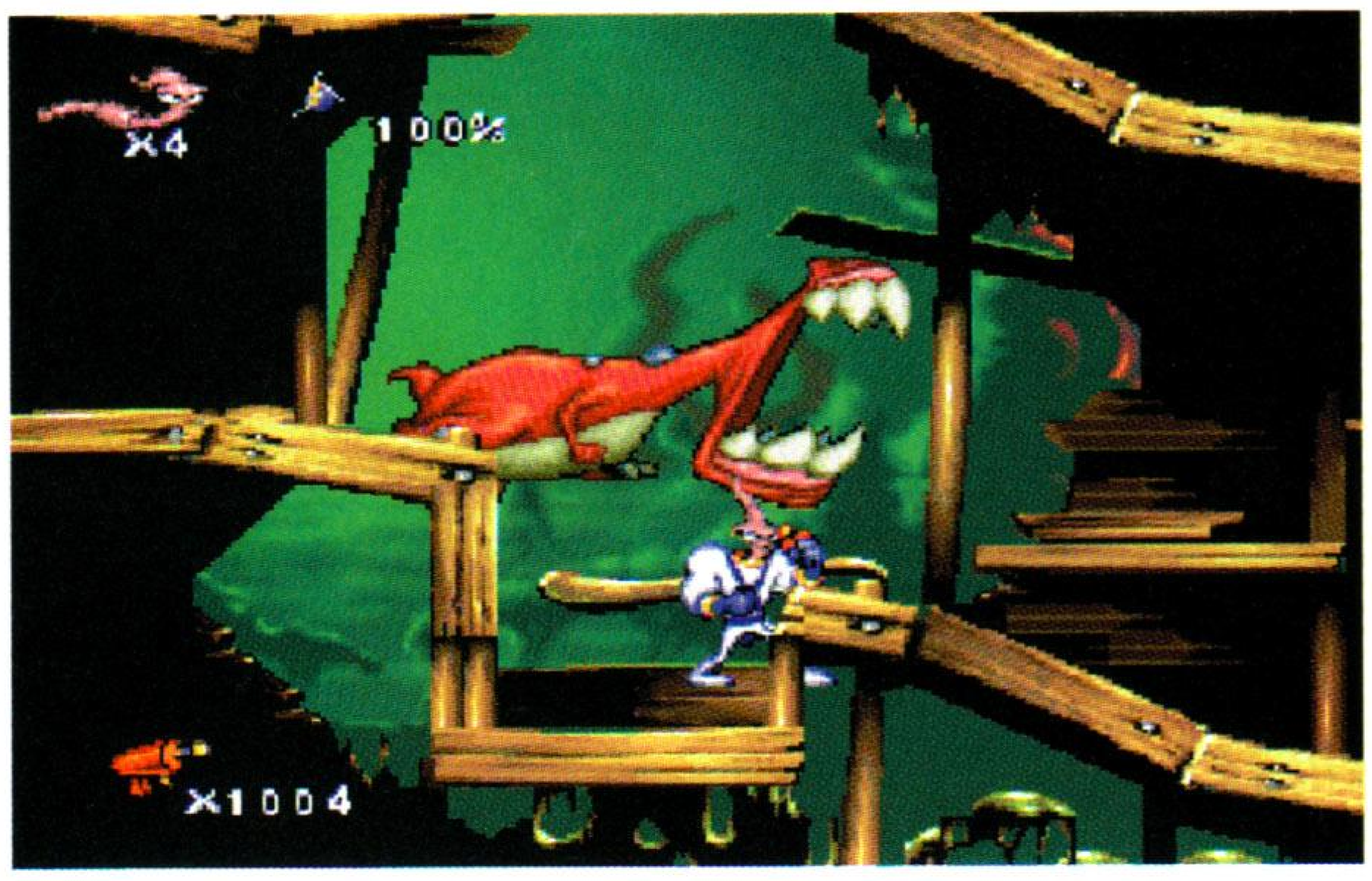
40 missions packed with all manner of military hardware! But can it compete with the Virgin classic?

This Means War! - An easy to get into, relatively enjoyable wargame



EARTHWORM JIM

Shiny's platform classic hits PC



Despite the PC's usual inability to cope with platform games, EWJ copes well

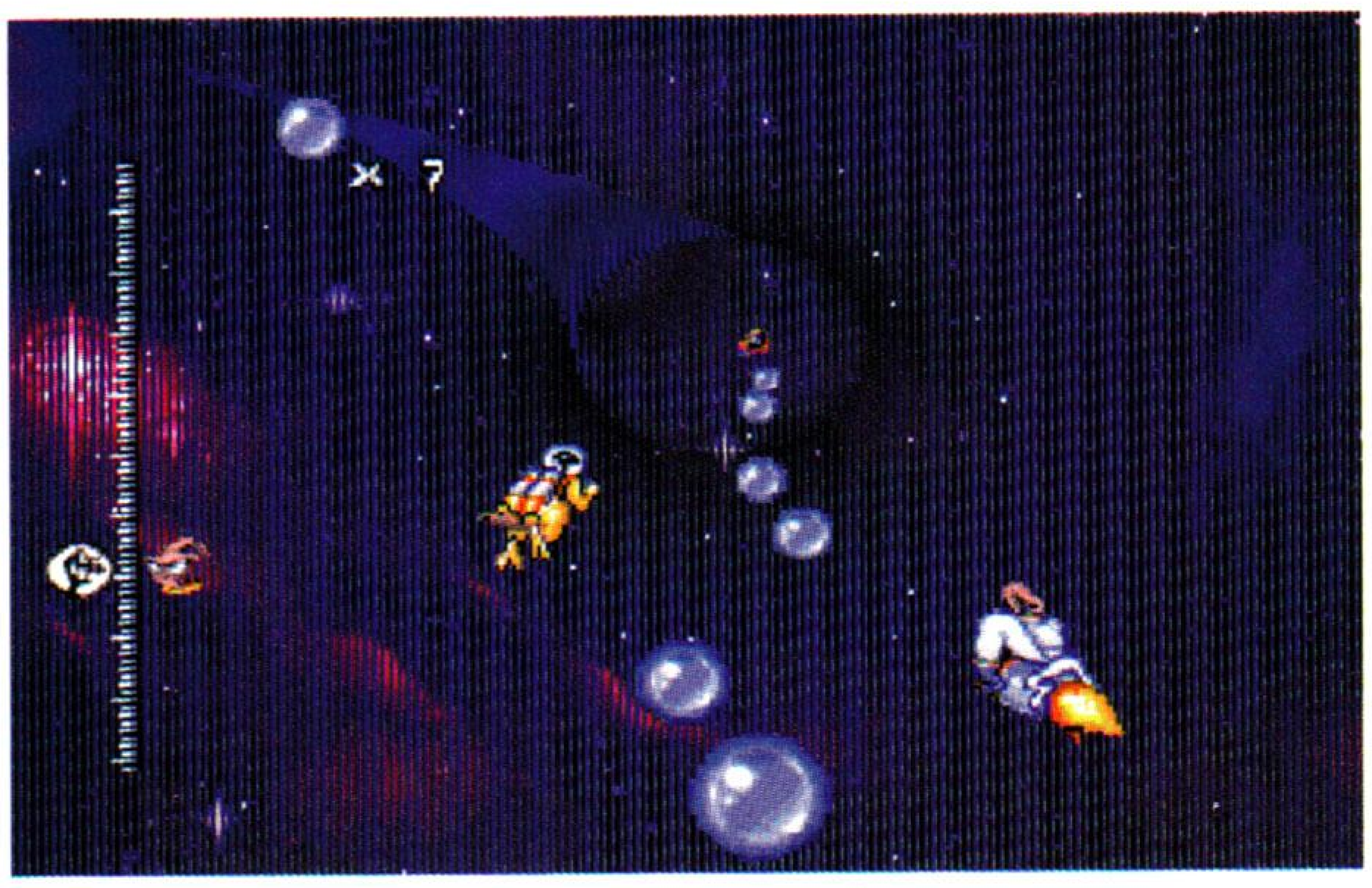
Previous PC platformers have been notoriously lame, with just a couple actually achieving any level of critical acclaim. Thankfully Activision's Windows '95 conversion of Earthworm Jim is one of the few romps worthy of praise, as it's not only a damn fine platform game, it's probably the best the PC has seen to date.

Originally released on the Megadrive almost two years ago, the PC version of Earthworm Jim is a slightly enhanced version of the first game (Earthworm Jim 2 is shortly due for release on the PC), including, for one, an all-new bonus level, making a total of 25 stages in all. While most are pretty much standard fare, running from left to right, grabbing power-ups along the way, occasionally Jim hops on the back of a space scooter in pursuit of arch-enemy Psycrow. Skimming through the winding weirdness of the wormhole, little Jim must avoid the oncoming asteroids and grab the power spheres, using them to keep his energy topped up while racing after the psycho spook.

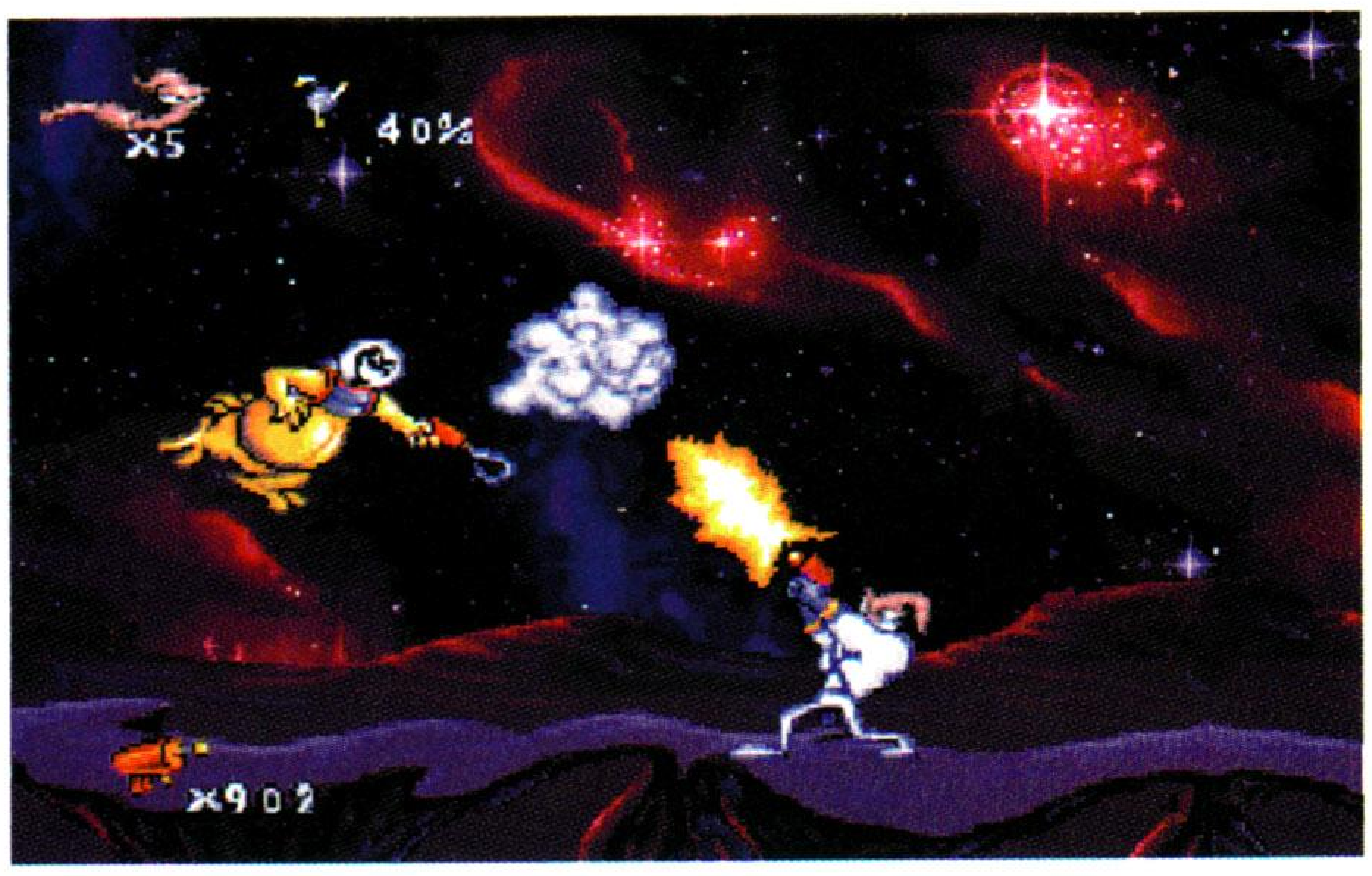
Back on terra firma, super-slug Jim can use his blaster pistol to fight off the nasties or, when ammo runs low, flick them with his whip-like bonce. This is also useful for swinging over gaping chasms which Jim normally can't cross, often hiding precious bonuses such as extra energy, ammo or even another life.

Although difficult at times, Earthworm Jim is never unbearably annoying, and as such the chances of giving up through sheer frustration are minimal. Visually it's pretty much perfect, and is full of character, variety and gags. One thing to note is the scrolling, which occasionally stutters on slower machines - ideally you'll need a Pentium to play Earthworm Jim, but even a DX2/66 is enough to enjoy what is arguably the best ledge-leaper yet to appear on the PC.

★★★★



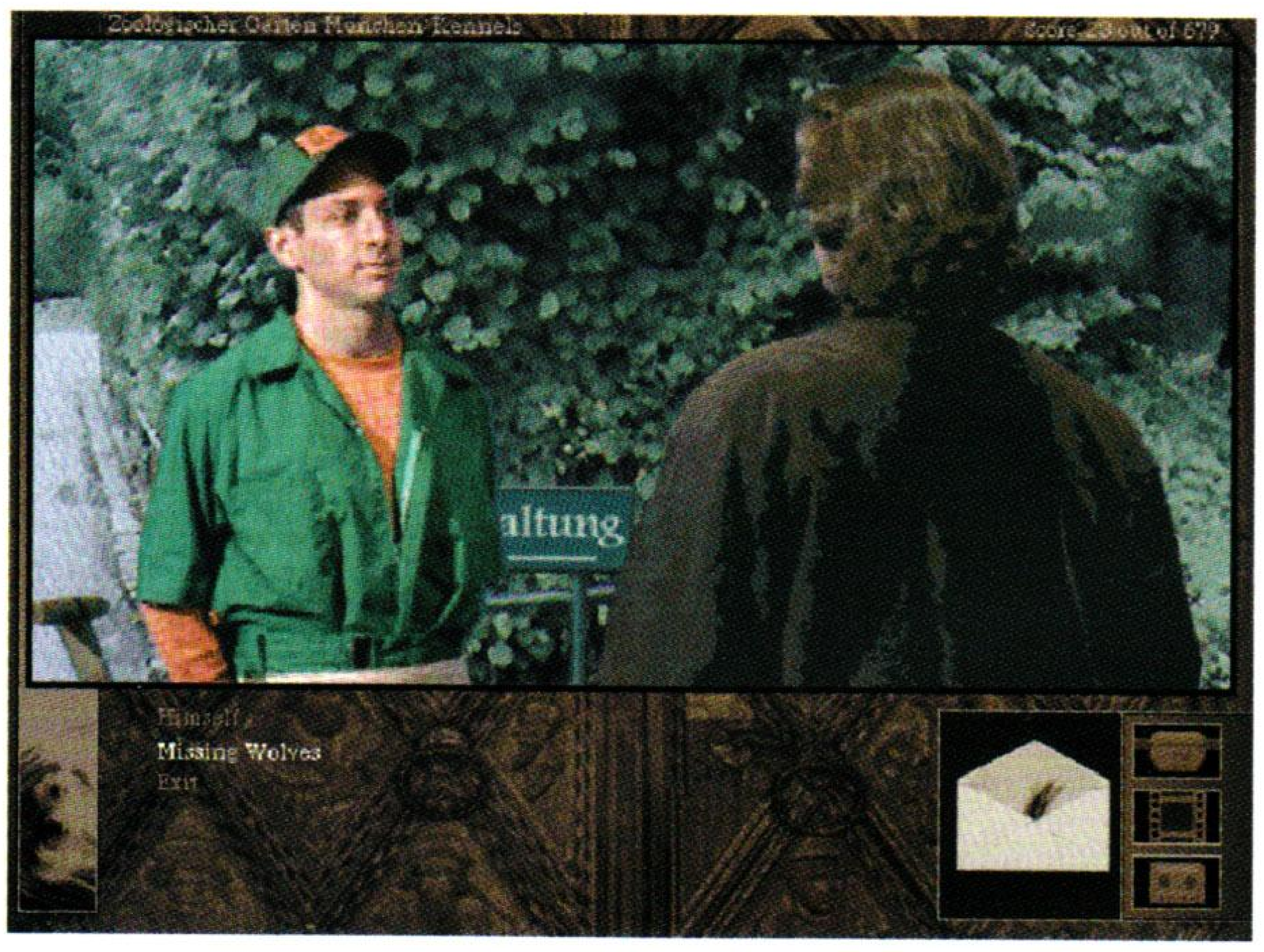
Earthworm Jim - An essential purchase for Windows '95 users?



GABRIEL KNIGHT: THE BEAST WITHIN

The return of the PC's supernatural sleuth

A QUALITY INTERACTIVE MOVIE FROM SIERRA?



Although fans of the first game will welcome the return of supernatural sleuth Gabriel Knight with open arms, most will find his latest mystery somewhat of a departure from the original game. Rather than sticking to the same tired old point-and-click formula, Sierra has opted to make The Beast Within - dare we say it - an interactive movie. It's similar to Phantasmagoria, but thankfully many of the underlying faults in Sierra's horror atrocity (it was extremely limited after all) have been ironed out for Gabriel Knight 2.

Like the first game The Beast Within is based on a compelling horror story, involving a missing girl thought to have been attacked by werewolves. The locals are obviously panic-stricken and call upon the services of heir Knight, currently hidden away in his German country house looking for inspiration for his forthcoming novel.

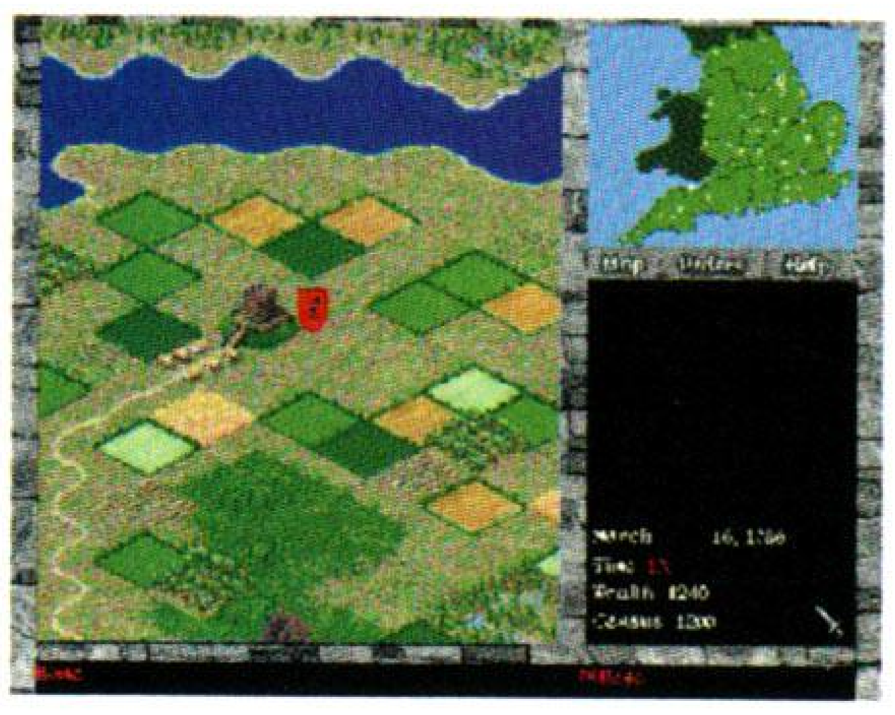
Divided in six chapters (each consuming one whole CD each!), Gabriel Knight begins the game with the bare-essentials - a couple of not-so-handy items and a smidgen of information regarding the attack. Only by piecing together clues found while exploring each location can Knight solve the mystery, and also by calling on the help of side-kick Grace, whom the player controls at various points during the adventure.

Unlike most other interactive movies, The Beast Within is one of the few which manage grasp the attention of the player, largely due to the interesting plot that runs throughout. Graphically the game is pretty smart too, the digitised actors working well with the computer-generated on which they're super-imposed. The full-motion video sequences are slick, if a little drawn-out, so listening to Knight babble on about the occult often gets a little tiresome. Still, these minor gripes are overshadowed by what is otherwise a gripping, atmospheric adventure into the supernatural.

★★★★

CONQUEROR AD1086

Defender of the Crown gets a 1996 facelift in Sierra's latest

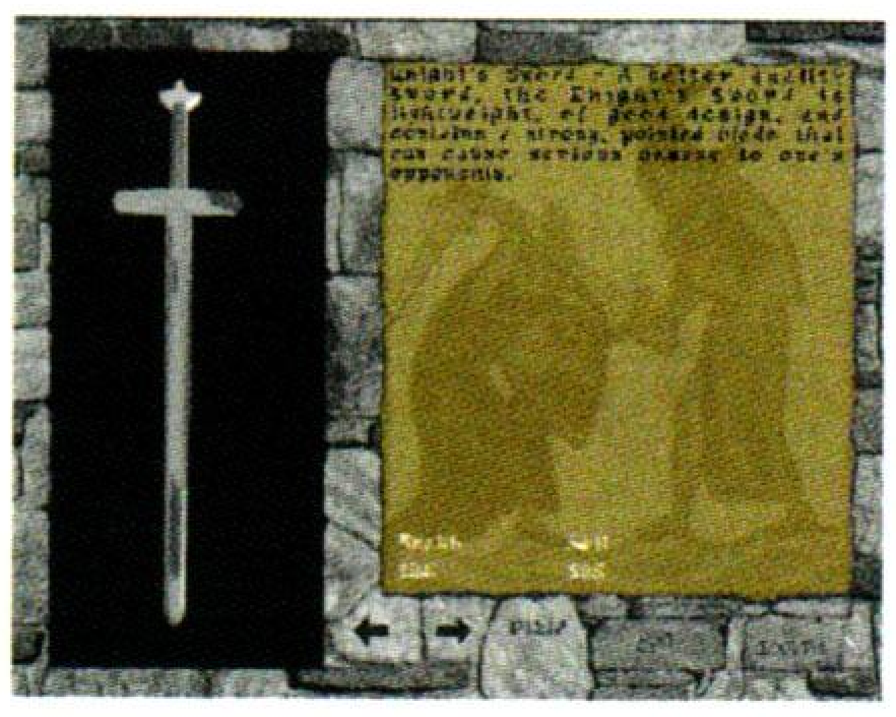


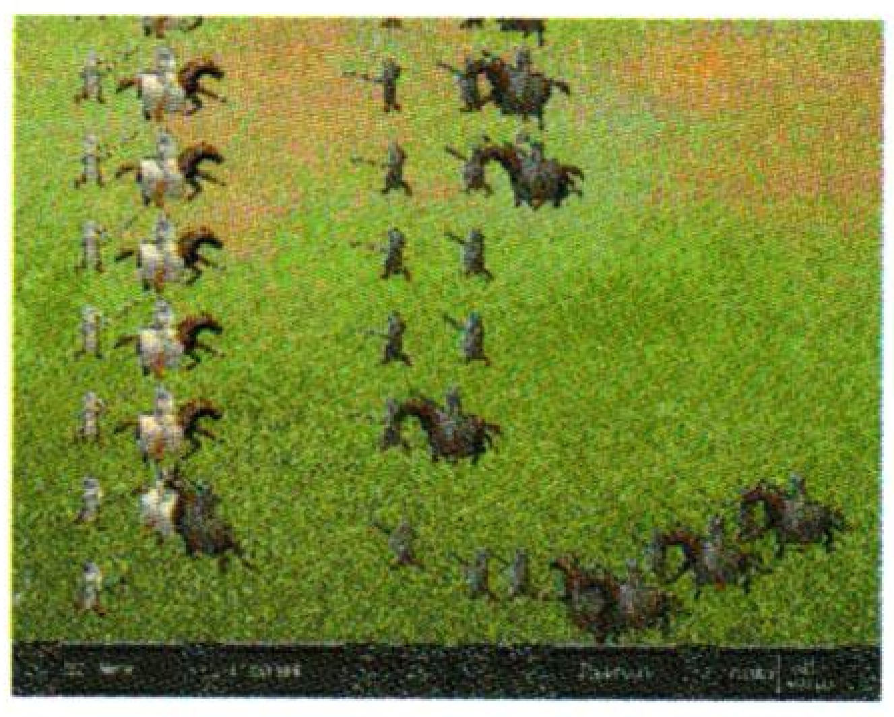
Conqueror AD1086 is a journey back to the hazy days of the Commodore Amiga, to Cinemaware's Defender of the Crown. Like the archaic classic, Conqueror is a dragon-slaying romp through mediaeval England. While Conqueror is a little more advanced, both visually and in terms of gameplay, in essence they're both extremely similar. The game can be played in one of two ways. The first is to guide your young knight to success by gradually building up his village, stretching out his empire before finally making a bid for the crown. Alternatively you can remain faithful to the king, choosing to serve as one of his champions and proving yourself by slaying the dragon that's plaguing the realm.

Whatever path you choose, the road ahead is a treacherous one. Other knights are also looking to take over the throne, so the competition is fierce and more often than not is decided over a bloody battle. Of course, an honourable knight would settle any conflict on the playing field, either by jousting or fighting it out in hand-to-hand combat. What's more, a healthy reward or even the hand of a fair maiden can be won if you emerge victorious.

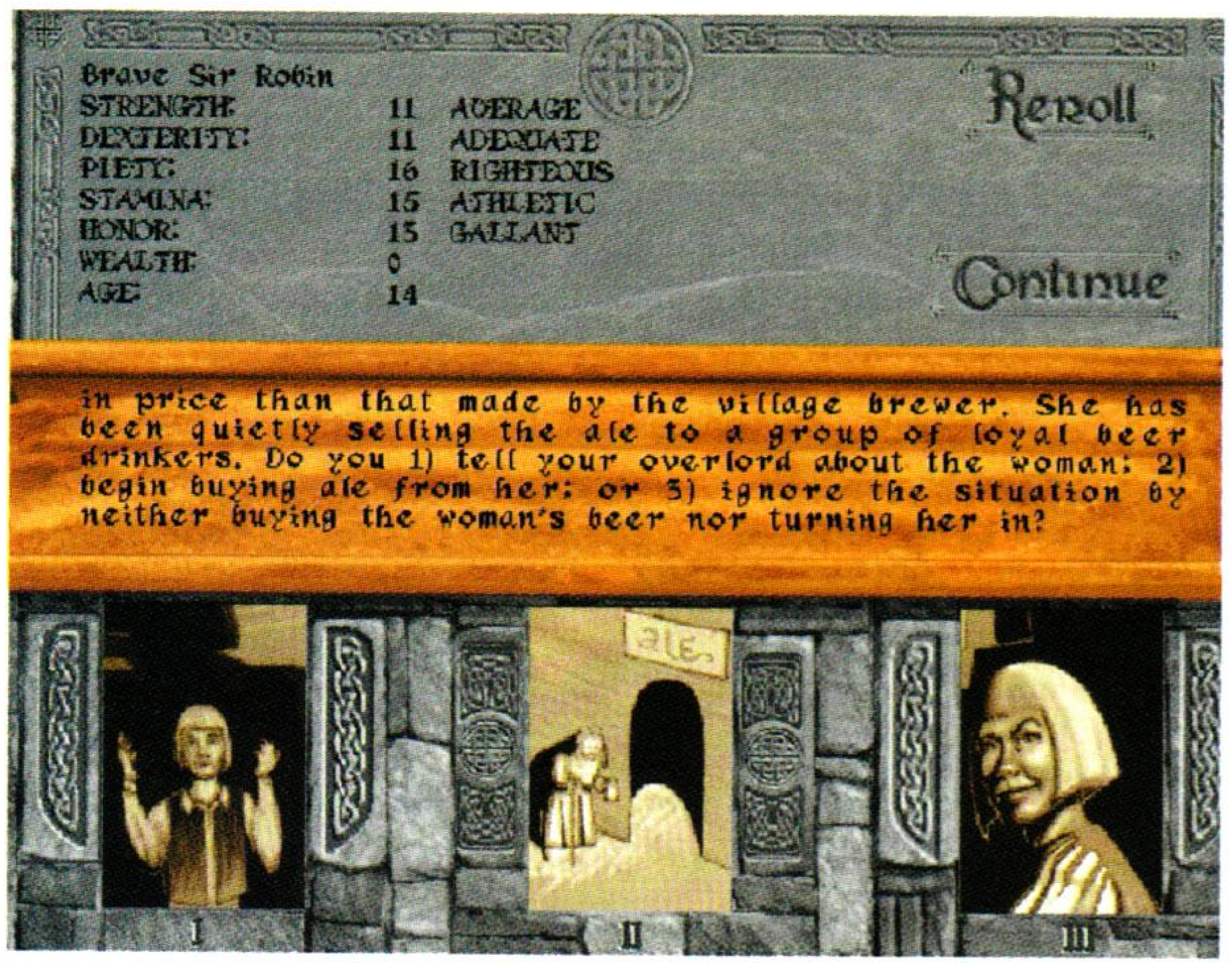
But, even with all this swordplay and wench-wooing, Conqueror is a mediocre cocktail of strategy and fighting. The Super VGA graphics are okay with some cool cutscenes, but the clumsy control system and lack of any real excitement makes Conqueror AD1086 more of a cowardly squire boy than a dragon-slaying knight.

★★★



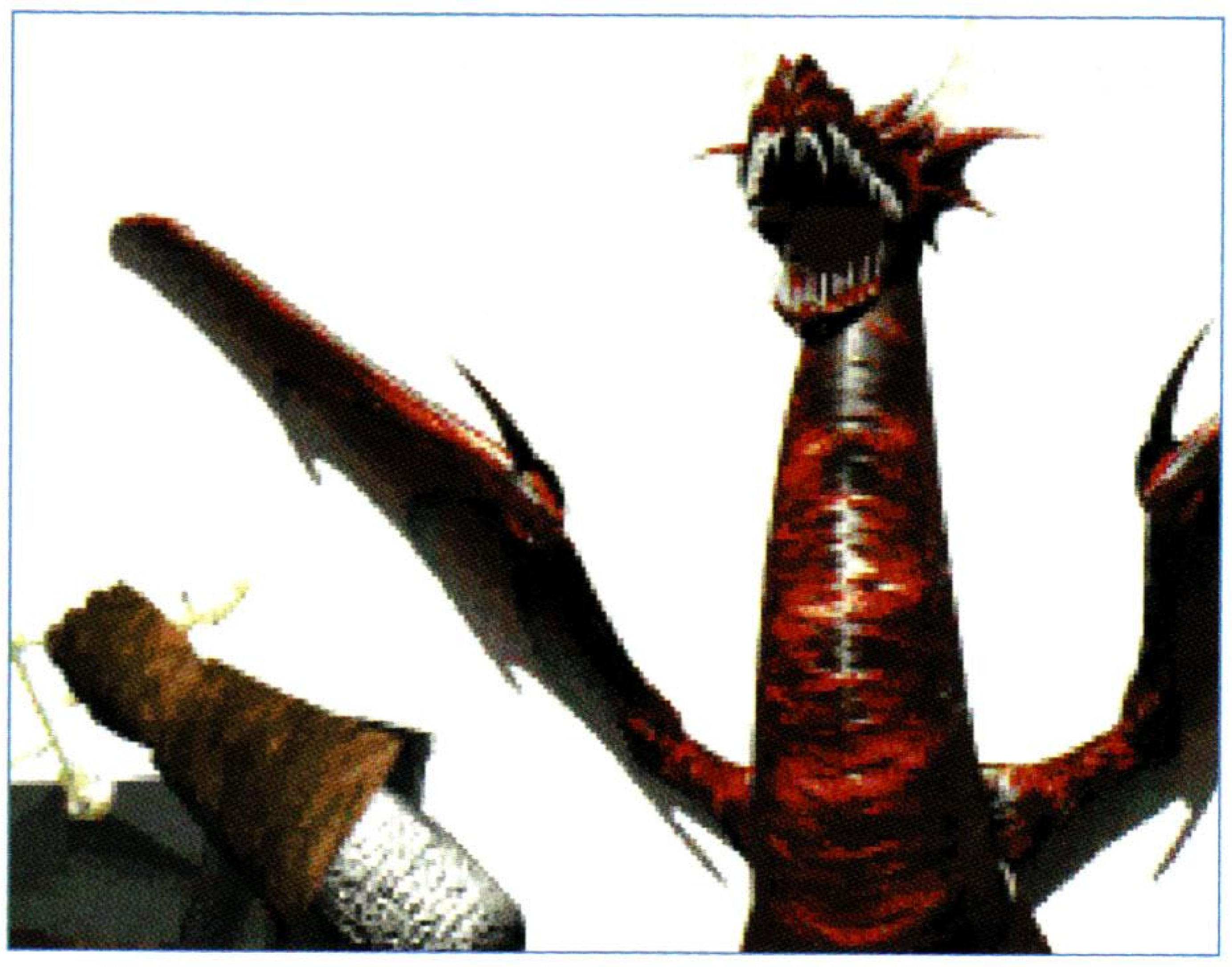


DOES THIS NEW RELEASE TAKE THE WARGAME GENRE ANY FURTHER?
IN THE VAST ARENA OF STRATEGY TITLES, CAN CONQUEROR COMPETE?



Brave Sir Robin
STRENGTH: 11 AVERAGE
DEXTERITY: 11 ADEQUATE
PIETY: 16 RIGHTEOUS
STAMINA: 15 ATHLETIC
HONOR: 15 GALLANT
WEALTH: 0
AGE: 14

in price than that made by the village brewer. She has been quietly selling the ale to a group of loyal beer drinkers. Do you 1) tell your overlord about the woman; 2) begin buying ale from her; or 3) ignore the situation by neither buying the woman's beer nor turning her in?



CHRONOMASTER

Cut through time and space in US Gold's compelling graphic adventure

Penned by the late, great author Roger Zelazny, Chronomaster is a prime example of the acclaimed writer's ability to create a compelling story that rewrites the rules of science as it goes. The game, a point-and-click adventure from developed by Intracorp, is a sumptuous feast of crisp high-resolution graphics and cunning object-related puzzles, topped off with a delicate layer of science fiction.

In the future the universe is a very different place, comprising of man-made 'pocket worlds', each one different from the next in that they obey laws of physics defined by their human creator. Unfortunately two of these shake-and-bake colonies - the planets Urbs and Aurans - have effectively been shut down by mysterious force, their inhabitants frozen in time by a powerful stasis field. Enter Rene Korda, ex-pocket universe designer and hero of Chronomaster. He's been drafted in to sort out the mess before space pirates invade the disrupted pocket worlds, looting them dry while the citizens stand helpless.

The key to success is found by locating the source of the problem, by tapping into each of the problem planets in turn by locating magnetic north and rigging up sensitive scanning equipment. Of course, it's never quite this easy, as Korda is faced with some frighteningly difficult puzzles, as well as attacked by galaxy corsairs and fired upon by an evil Terminator-type assassin!

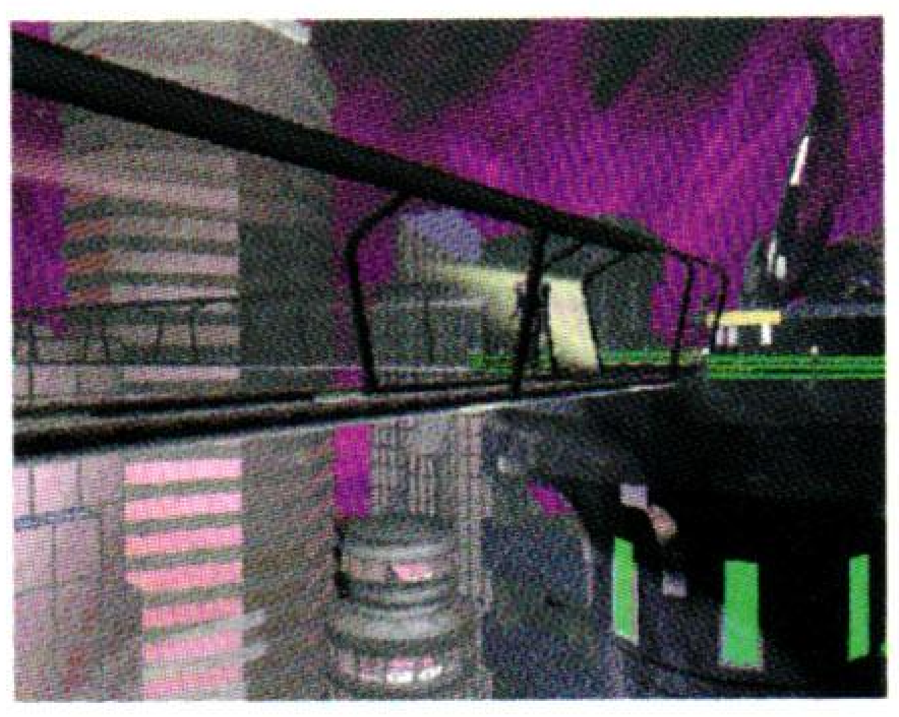
Although the planet's are frozen in time, Korda is free to explore thanks to a portable time-field that encapsulates him. Unfortunately the sphere also affects anything he touches, so care must taken to avoid any dangerous objects like snakes, whirlwinds... practically everything you come across, really. Help is at hand though, in the form of Jester, the ship's voluptuous hologram who's always ready in times of trouble.

Like most graphic adventures, if there's an object lying around, the chances are you'll need later in the game. Unfortunately the mouse-controlled cursor isn't intelligent, and a lot of the objects are found by squinting at the screen, looking for anything out of the ordinary, Still, the interface is extremely quick and easy to use, if a little frustrating at times.

The most notable feature of Chronomaster is its presentation though. Graphically it's very slick indeed, the rendered locations, characters and cutscenes are nothing short of stunning. Better still are the voice-overs, provided by the likes of Brent Spiner (Data from Star Trek: The Next Generation) and Beauty and the Beast's Ron Perlman. They give the game characters, and also add atmosphere to an already intriguing adventure.

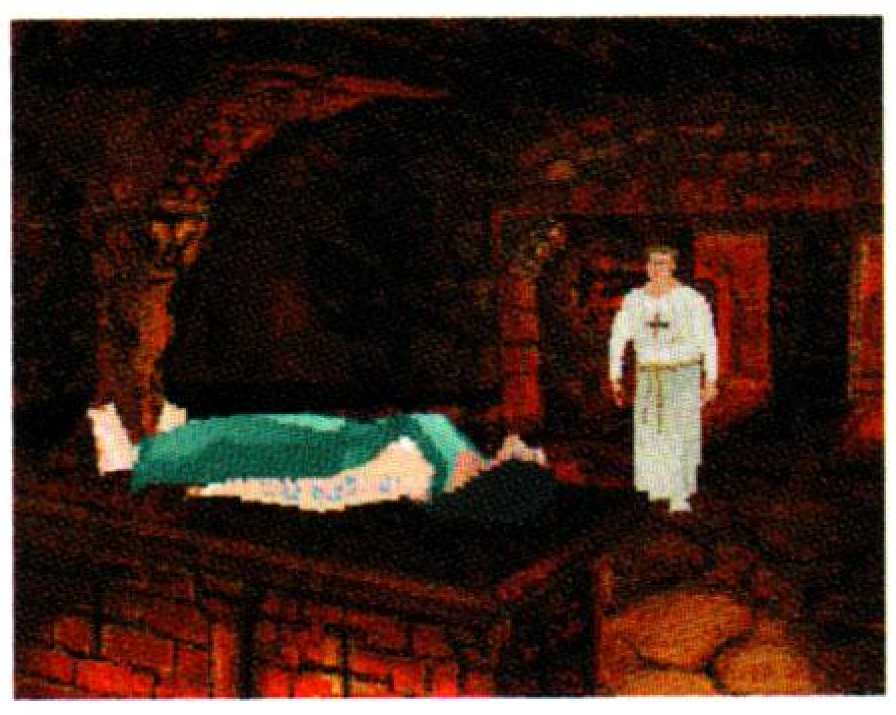
In fact Chronomaster is a pretty difficult game to criticise. Okay, some of the conversations tend to drag on, and dying unexpectedly and then dumped back to the previous save slot is a tad annoying, but overall this is one of the most enjoyable, engrossing graphic adventures of late. Excellent stuff.

★★★★★



TIME GATE

Is time Gate just another Alone In The Dark clone?



Infogrames has gone too far. The Alone In The Dark trilogy are undeniably great games, but after milking the genre dry surely a change of plan is necessary. Obviously not if Time gate is anything to go by, as it's more than just a tribute to the Edward Carnby adventures - it's practically identical. Admittedly, Time Gate is a slight improvement in terms of presentation, but the game engine is practically the same and therefore many of the faults that plagued Alone In the Dark 3 are present here.

The game is set during two time periods, beginning in 1995 and eventually returning to the 14th Century. Cast as student William Tibbs, the objective of Time Gate is to rescue fiancee Juliette from the clutches of Wolfram, an evil bloke who's dragged Tibbs' beloved back to the year 1329.

Set inside a mediaeval gaol run by Parisian monks, Time Gate is crammed with rooms, chapels and chambers, all viewed from predetermined camera angles that automatically switch as Tibbs explores each scene. While each of the locations is detailed and atmospheric, very few are animated and therefore Time Gate looks a bit too static. The character sprites, constructed from Gouraud-shaded polygons, move realistically and generally look pretty cool, but still they're quite dated. Texture-mapped characters, which were used to great effect in BioForge, look considerably better and don't suffer from the same lack of definition as they walk into the distance.

In terms of gameplay, Time Gate is a balanced mix of swordplay and brain-teasing puzzles. Tibbs' can perform one of three action: fight; search; and push. The latter is used to move objects and operate levers, while examining the immediate area often uncovers hidden objects. Fighting is a little more complex, with various punches, kicks and headbutts pulled off by holding down the action button in conjunction with one of the cursor keys. Additionally, Tibbs' can use any of the weapons scattered throughout the game, from the weedy sword hanging in the museum to a mighty cleaver saved for the finale. Other objects are used in much the same way, selecting the item and then choosing how to use it. For example, food can either be consumed or dropped on the floor, while the remote controlled catapult can be left behind, reloaded or fired.

So, from the very start, Time Gate is pretty much identical to the Alone in the Dark trilogy. No problem if you're an avid fan of Edward Carnby's adventures, but personally would have preferred a little more originality. Some of the plot twists are neat, like Tibbs' transformation from pathetic college student to powerful Eagle warrior when he finally confronts arch-enemy Wolfram, but Time Gate could have easily been so much more. As it stands, it's essentially Alone in the Dark 4. Disappointing.

★★★

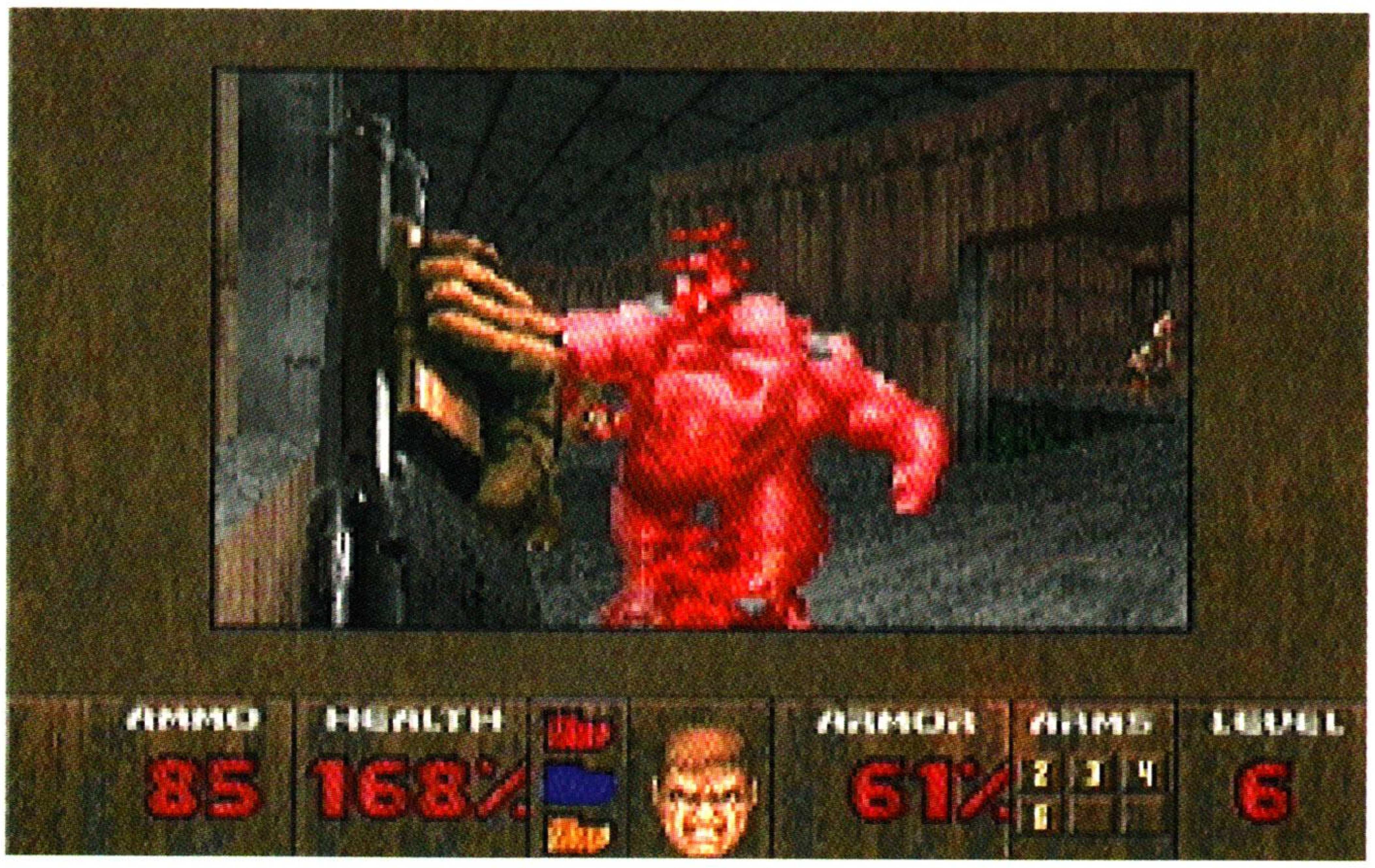
> ***SURELY SOME NEW INNOVATIONS ARE DUE FROM FRANCE'S LEADING SOFTWARE HOUSE?***

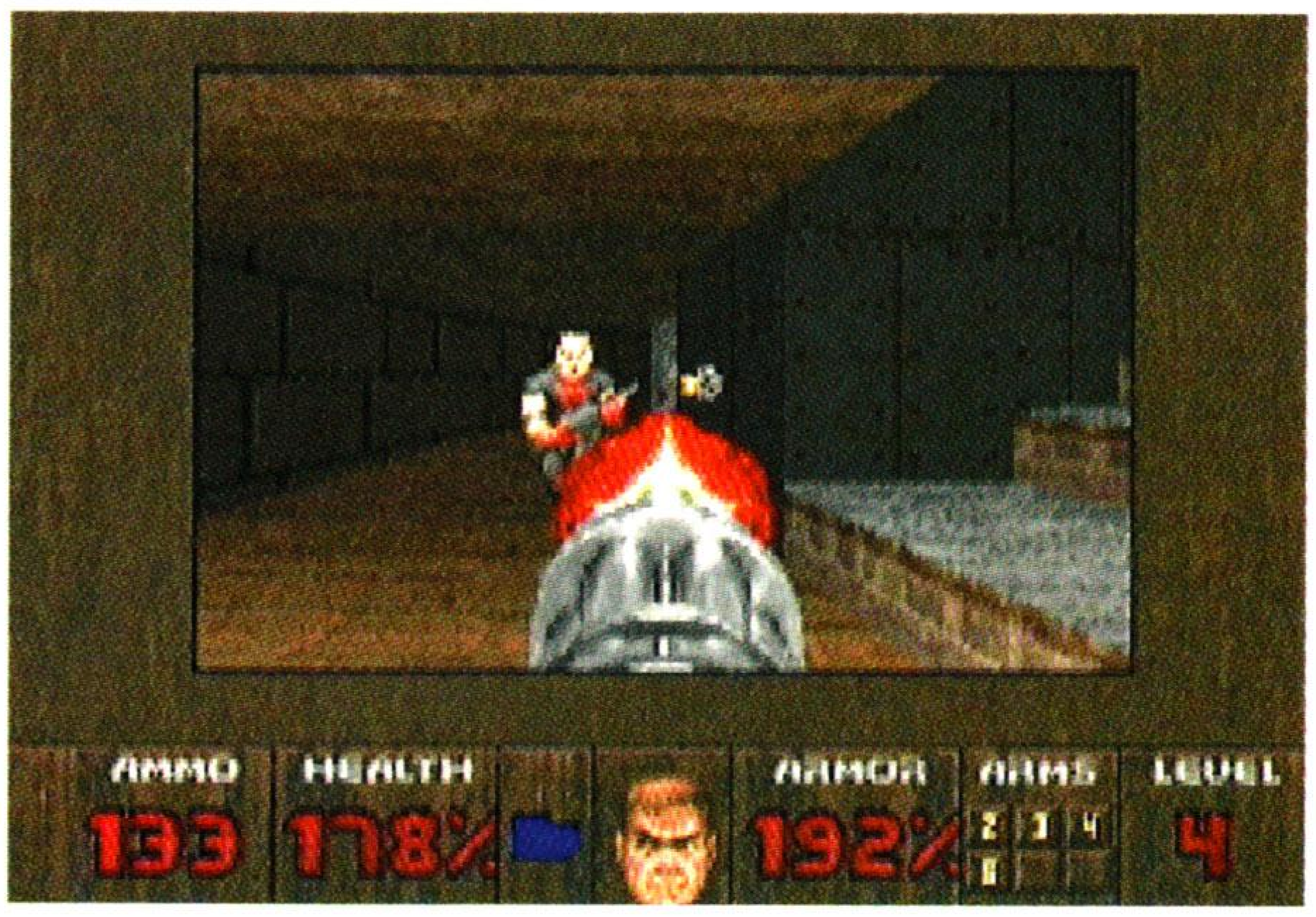
MAXIMUM plugged in the 3DO recently and sat down to an extended play session on Super Street Fighter II: Turbo - an example of an incredible videogame and a true testament to the power of the 3DO when in the hands of accomplished programmers. Unfortunately, the stories of all the decent 3DO programmers leaving to work on M2 must be true, when judging the quality of recent wares. Our spirits were raised by the announcement that Doom (one of our favourite videogames ever) was just about ready. We saw the screenshots, which made it look just as good as the other Doom conversions (bar the PlayStation game). Finally, we thought, a game on the 3DO we can really rave about. But then we played it.

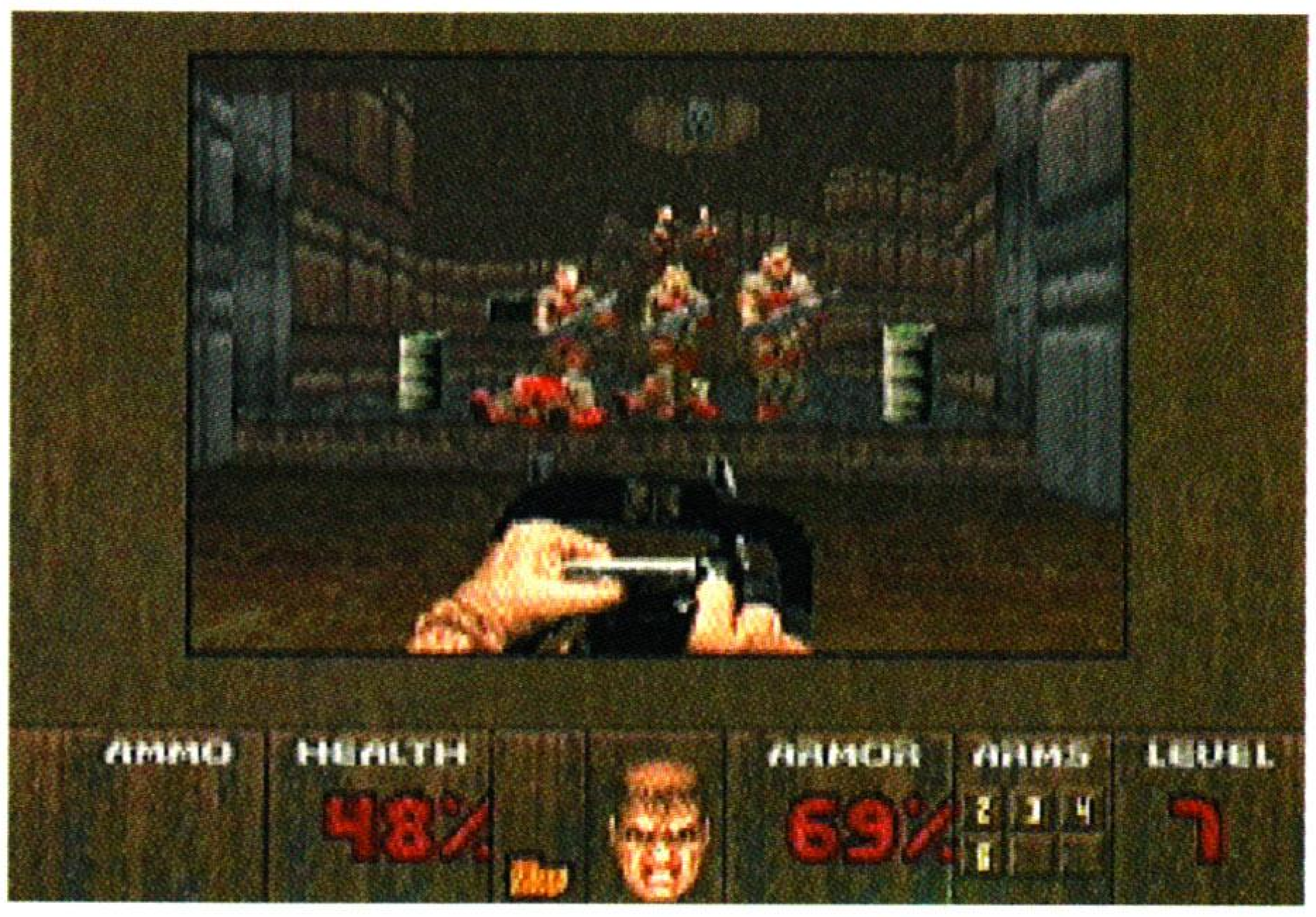
For months now we have been bemoaning the lack of good games for the powerful platform. It seems that now the only thing we have to look forward to is the launch of the M2. Stories that the machine could handle a version of Sega Rally (with three times the detail of the *arcade* version) are just about enough to keep our enthusiasm for 3DO alive. Barely.

DOOM for the 3DO?

MAXIMUM examines this disappointing translation



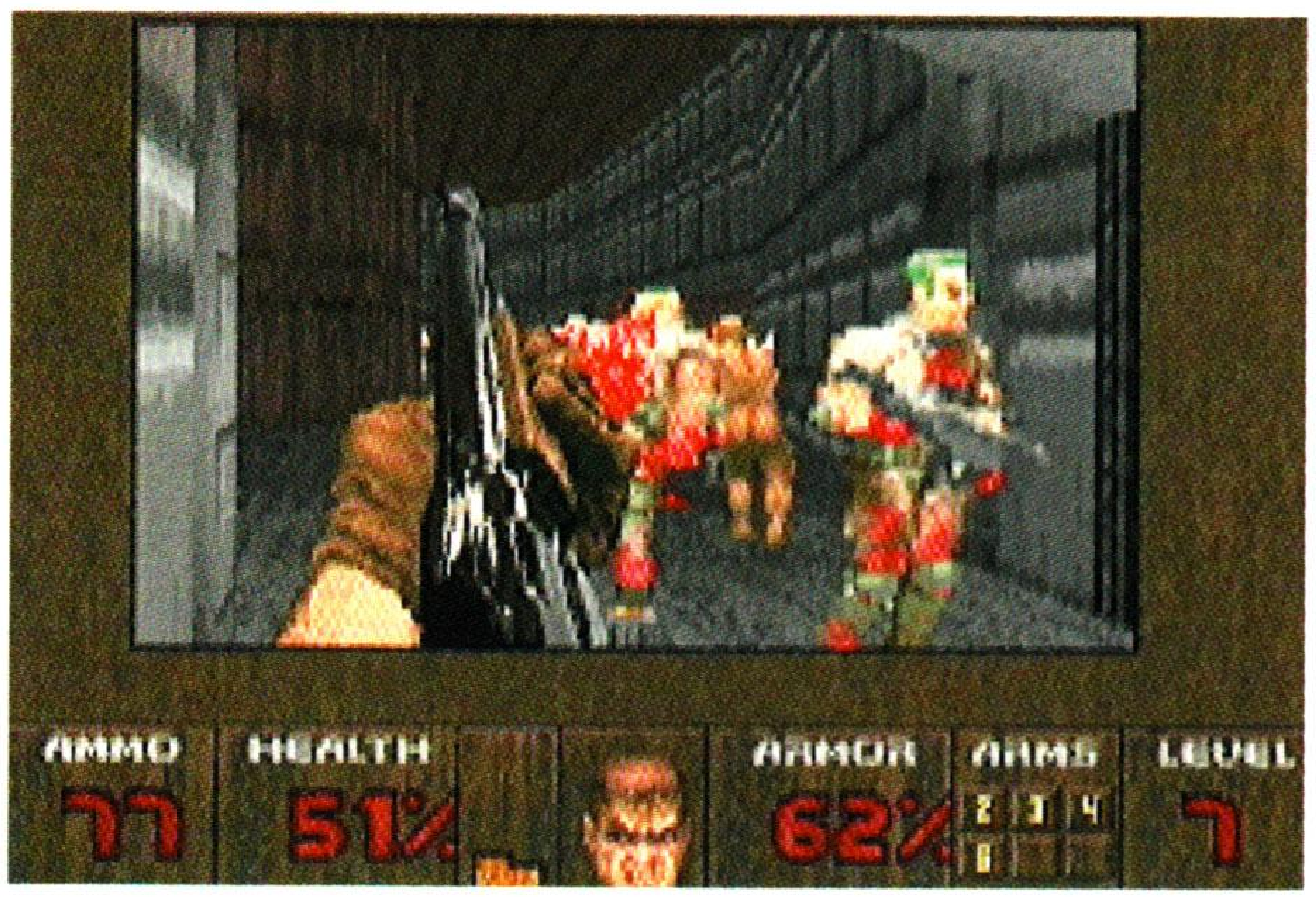




Doom: the mere mention of the game is enough to elicit much excitement from the **MAXIMUM** team - after all, despite being converted across from PC to a myriad of platforms, the game **never** disappoints. Hell, even the Megadrive 32X and Super NES versions of the classic are pretty good - there may have been graphical compromises or smaller amounts of levels, but the gameplay has always been second to none. The Doom formula has transferred across marvellously - it's by far and away the best Jaguar game for example (not surprising as id themselves carried out that particular translation).

But now the unthinkable has happened. A version of the game has appeared that is an affront to videogaming - a game that has previously been synonymous with quality no matter what the technical specification of the host system has been raped, reduced to a mockery of its former selves. Yes, believe it or not, 3DO Doom (which has been promised for so very long) is bad. Not just bad, but unbelievably poor. By every measure, this conversion is a dismal failure.

THE SCREENSHOTS TELL THE STORY: 3DO DOOM IS A BADLY BORDERED VERSION OF THE CLASSIC ID RELEASE - WHAT HAS GONE WRONG ? EVEN THE MEGADRIVE 32X VERSION IS SUPERIOR TO THIS!



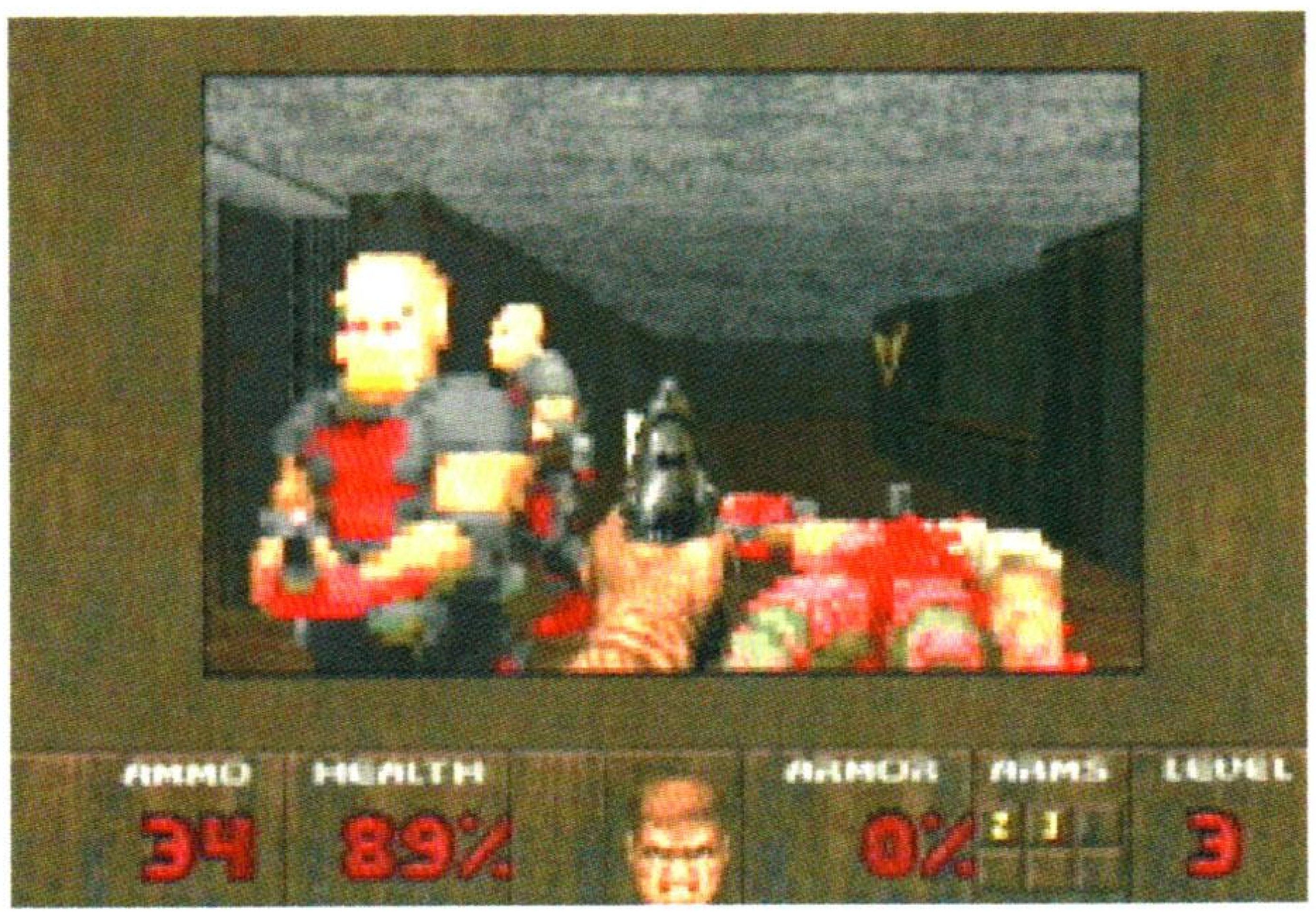
Where to begin with such a product as monumentally awful as this? Well, the most glaring deficiency can be seen in the graphics. Not only are the PAL borders absolutely huge, the gaming window is also enclosed in a lower-detail window. Believe it or not, the shots on these pages show the game with the *maximum possible* screen size. Yes, believe it or not, the much-maligned 32X version has smaller borders. What makes this quite puzzling is the fact that the game's packaging (and indeed several 3DO magazine reviews) show the game with a full-screen window - what a cynical way to con 3DO owners into believing that they're getting a version of Doom that's nigh-on identical to the PC version. Oddly enough, inside the game's manual, true screenshots (with all the borders) are shown.

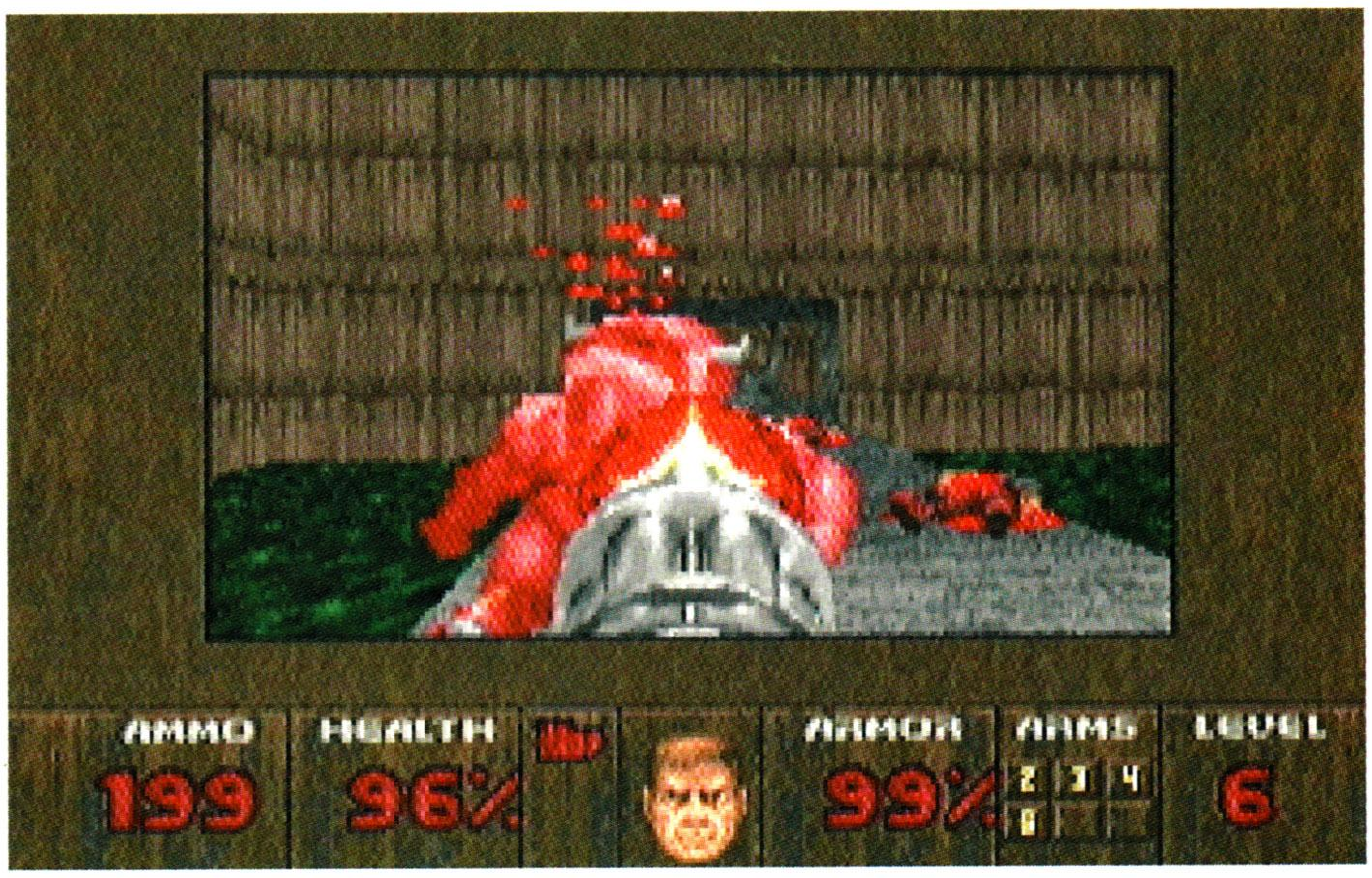
Continuing the comparisons to the 32X version, it's also fair to point out that the frame rate of the 3DO version is far lower than the Sega game (yes, even with this tiny letterbox-within-a-letterbox display). The mammoth jerkathon that you have to endure with this version is frankly unacceptable - by using the option, you can half the screen size again and then you have an acceptable level of smoothness. Even on the lower screen-sizes, the jerkiness of the game increases dependant on the amount of moving monsters on-screen. If there is more than three, the game has severe problems.

The issue of smoothness is actually supremely important. Not only is the update extremely jerky, it also ruins the game's response. This is a real shame, because the programmers' control system using the 3DO joypad is actually very good indeed - most intuitive indeed. In this regard, the conversion team have done well (especially considering the button deficiency on the basic 3DO pad).

The final nail in this poorly constructed coffin has to be the actual graphics themselves. As you can see from the shots, the colour brown definitely rules in this conversion. Just about every texture-map in the game appears to be based on that most unappealing of colours. A lot of the intricate detail on the PC and PlayStation versions has been lost - in fact, even the 32X and Jaguar games look better than this. The phrase "dog's dinner" springs to mind here.

Audio-wise, the sound effects are nigh-on identical to the PC version, which is as it should be. However, the music has been "remixed". Gone are the atmospheric tunes of the other versions, substituted with okay (but highly inappropriate) American soft rock renditions of those Doom classics - it's like a kind of Spinal Tap remix, although any amusing lyrics are of course absent. This is all fine in itself, but the lack of atmosphere that results from these tunes does detract from the overall game.

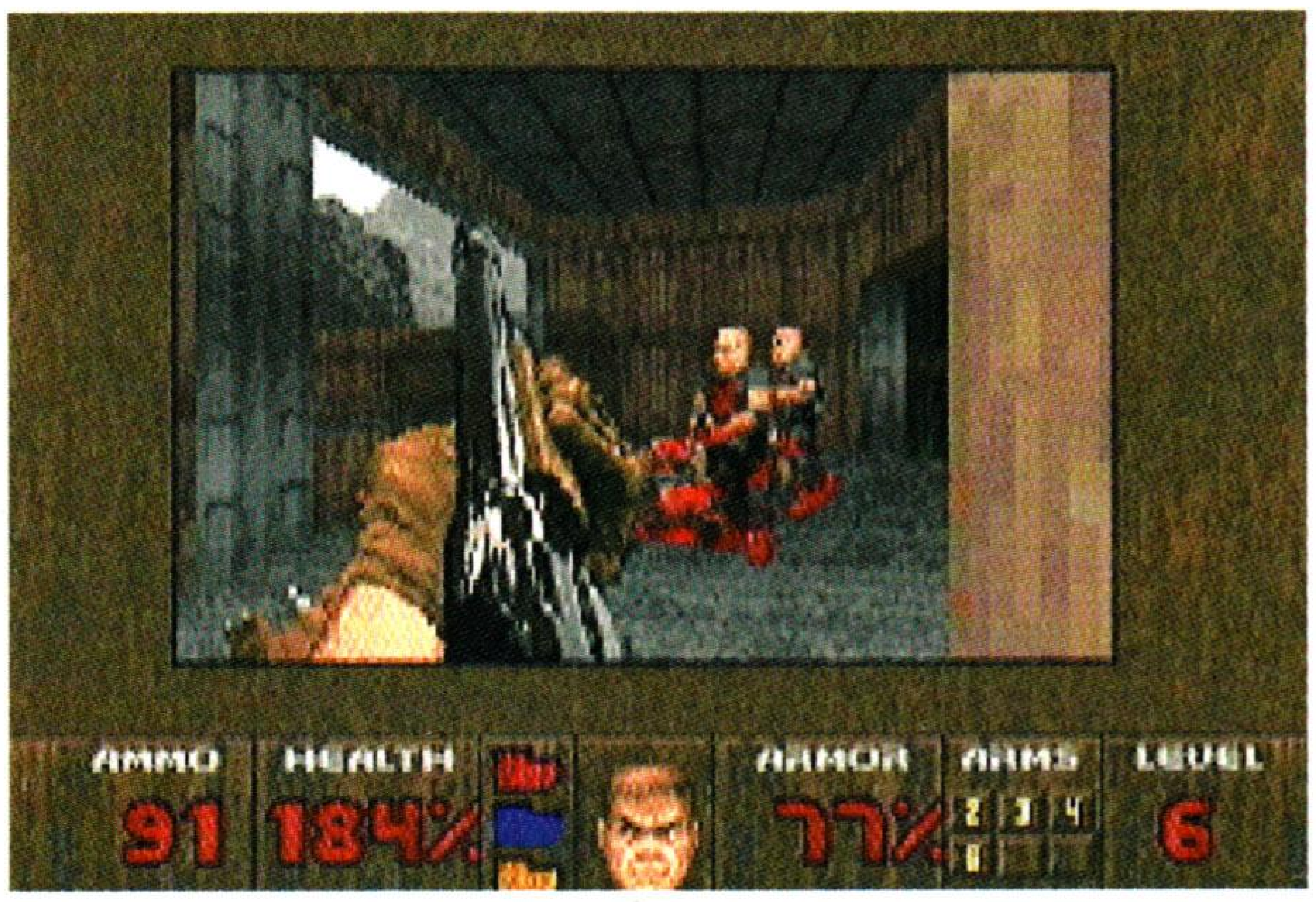




Okay, Doom is Doom. So that in itself should be some consolation, considering that it is one of the most finely constructed videogames ever. And yes, reduce the screen size to near-microscopic levels and you do have a game that's almost on a par with the other versions. Well, almost. For some strange reason, the 3DO version of the game tends to pause at the most inopportune times - it seems as if the game is loading in individual weapons or monsters. Although not a serious flaw, this is yet another frustrating delay to a game seriously lacking any kind of pace.

Also serving to irritate beyond belief is the fact that the conversion team have certainly missed some tricks with the AI of the game's monsters. **MAXIMUM** started the game on Ultraviolence level and found that despite the awful response and jerky update, progress through the game seemed remarkably easy. It turns out that the 3DO version's monsters lack a great deal of the intelligence of their PC brethren. Your adversaries take ages to fire at you, allowing you plenty of time to blast them into smithereens. When large amounts of monsters arrive to beat the crap out of you, the game slows down to such an extent that you have ages to line up your shots and fire. A few laughs were had when the soldiers (who had a clear shot at us from behind) walked around us and rather accomadatingly strolled right in front of our shotgun! What's going on here? Can the 3DO version really be *that* bad?

The most eagerly awaited 3DO game in years has arrived and something terribly wrong has occurred - Art Data Interactive have handed in a sub-standard conversion



Unfortunately, yes. Released suddenly with little in the way of publicity, Doom 3DO can only be described as a cynical attempt to rip off game-starved owners of the machine. There is absolutely no excuse for this outrage - the 3DO is capable of far superior 3D than this (even the abysmal PO'ed has better graphics than this). In fact, developers have gone on record to complement the machine on its excellent texture-mapping capabilities. So why is Doom so bad? Stories have emanated from apologetic developers about a short development schedule - well we've heard that one before from the 32X developers and they managed to do much better with less powerful hardware. Besides, such excuses mean nothing to the average guy on the street spending upwards of £35 on 3DO products. Surely id themselves (who delay release dates if the software isn't finished and of a decent quality) would have had the power to veto this trash?

Doom is sadly indicative of the downward trend in the quality of 3DO software. Something has to be done or contrary to the recent 3DO ad campaign, this machine *is* as dead as a dodo. Can it be that all the talented developers have forsaken 3DO in preference to the supremely powerful M2?

Whatever the excuses are, one thing's for sure: someone, somewhere has got an awful lot of explaining to do. Let's hope for better things in the future. How about a version of Doom 2 that actually makes use of the 3DO's undisputed texture-mapping power?

★

Being at the centre of the gaming community, **MAXIMUM** tends to hear huge amounts of rumours concerning the forthcoming 3DO M2. Bear in mind that the machine is now being handled by the all-powerful Matsushita and we know that we're in for something good - the question is, how good? Our reports indicate a supremely powerful machine, easier to program than Nintendo 64 and around three times as fast in terms of sheer computational power. The latest rumours also indicate a launch scheduled to go head-to-head with Nintendo 64. Can we believe all of this? Well, let's hope so...

THE NEXT ISSUE OF

MAXIMUM

TEKKEN 2 KICKS OFF THE SPECIAL NAMCO COLLECTORS' ISSUE!

Ask any one who produces some of the greatest PlayStation and arcade games and the answer is sure to be Namco. The Japanese company is responsible for some of the greatest games ever seen, and this reputation is sure to be cemented in 1996 with the release of Tekken 2 and Ridge Racer Revolution, amongst others.

Next month's **MAXIMUM** focuses on Namco: the company and the software. In the next issue we'll see:

EUROPEAN EXCLUSIVE ON TEKKEN 2

The first and indeed greatest guide to what looks like being the PlayStation Game of the Year. Full moves lists for *every* character are promised along with exclusive **MAXIMUM**-specific artwork rendered especially for the magazine. It truly will be the PlayStation feature of the year.

FULL-ON RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION COVERAGE

Already released in Japan, Ridge Racer Revolution is undoubtedly the best racing game on the PlayStation. **MAXIMUM** goes in-depth on this stunning title - expect the attention to detail for which we are famous along with some incredible, exclusive rendered imagery.

NAMCO PLANS FOR '96

As well as concentrating in-depth on the classics detailed above, we'll be taking a look at Namco's plans for later on in 1996, plus summing up the Namco catalogue to date.

AND MORE...

Although Namco promise to dominate **MAXIMUM** issue #5, we promise to include pertinent Extended Plays, News and Reviews for all formats. Games to look forward to if you're a Saturn owner: THE FINISHED PANZER DRAGOON II! Gun Griffon: The Eurasian Conflict! Vampire Killer!

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ATTENTION! TRUE OR FALSE?

Please answer the following

	TRUE	FALSE
M2 IS A MOTORWAY!	☐	☐
ULTRA IS A WASHING POWDER!	☐	☐
JAGUAR IS A BIG BLACK PUSSY CAT!	☐	☐
SATURN IS A PLANET!	☐	☐
PLAYSTATION IS THE BEST GAMES CONSOLE IN THE UNIVERSE	☐	☐

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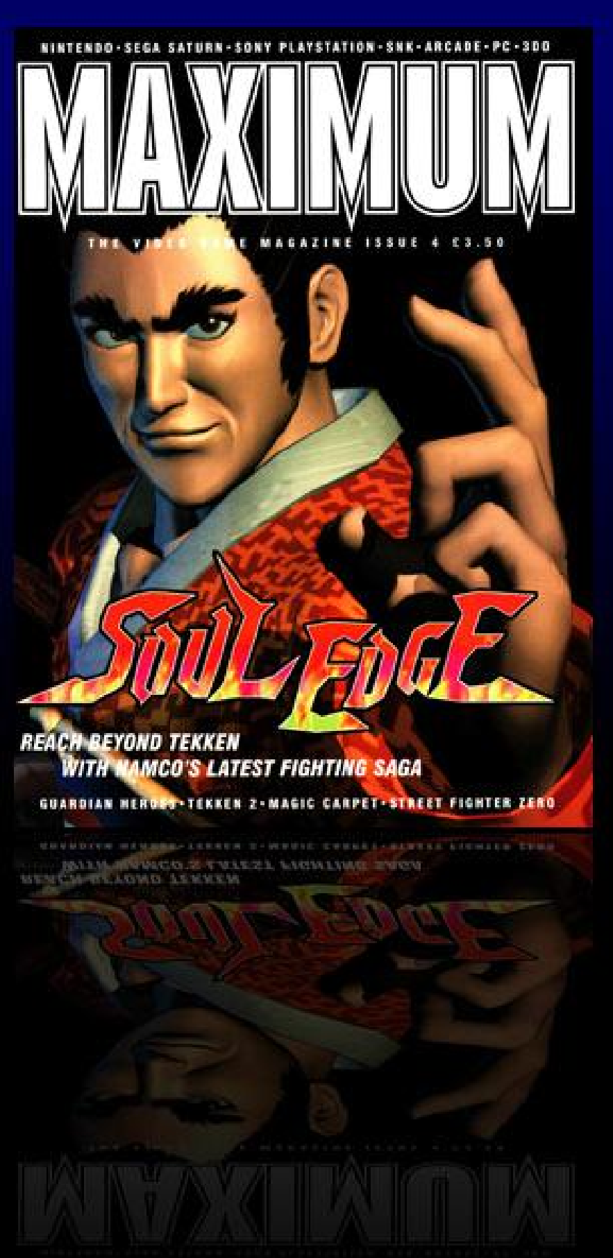

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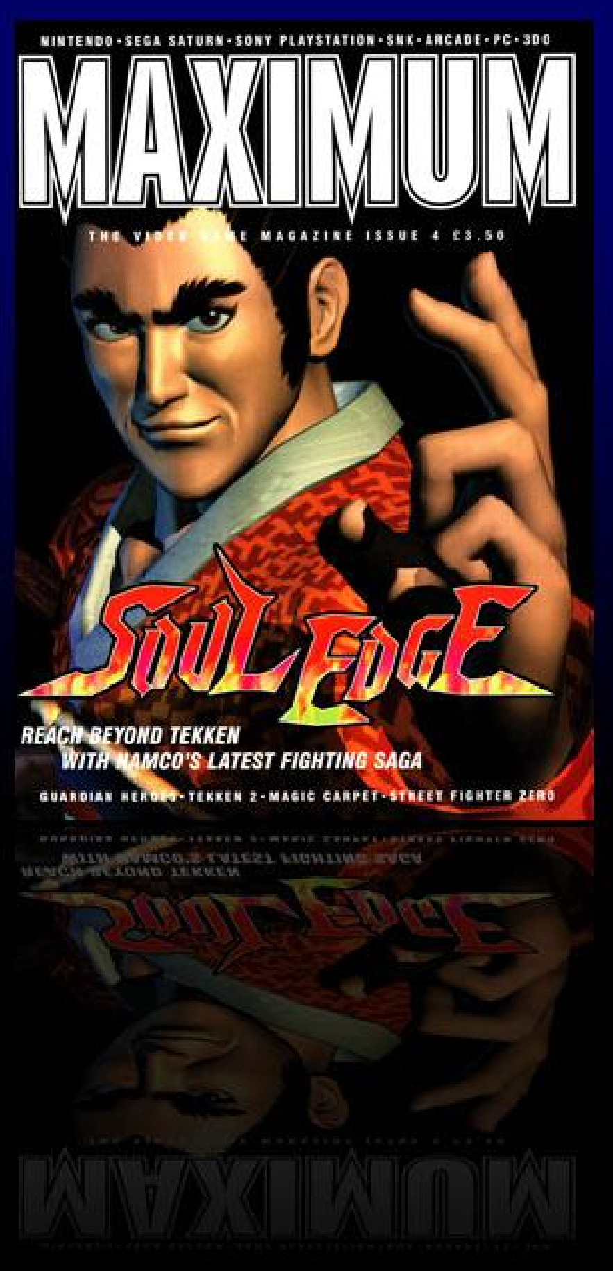

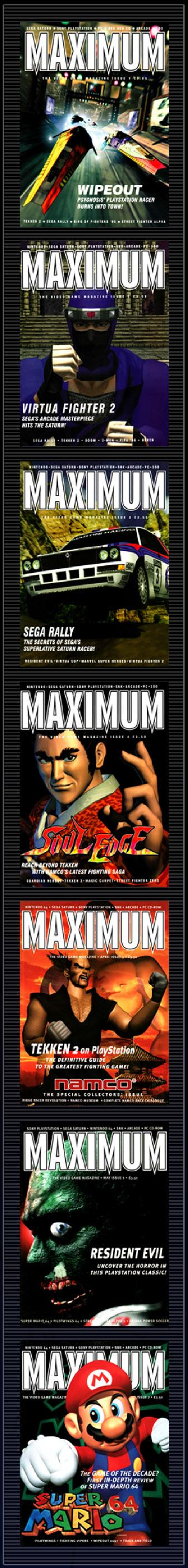

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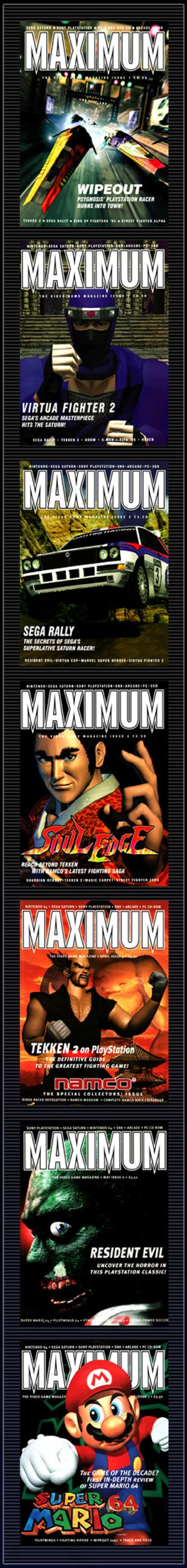OUT OF PRINT
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